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OF

THE THIRD VOLUME.

LIVES

OF

EMINENT FOREIGN STATESMEN.

JEAN FRANCOIS PAUL DE GONDI, CARDINAL DE RETZ.

BORN OCTOBER, 1614, DIED 24TH OF AUGUST, 1679.

I HAVE for some time hesitated as to whether I should insert the life of the cardinal de Retz in a book professing to treat of the biography of great statesmen, inasmuch as he governed no country, and never held any legitimate or authorised power in that land which he convulsed by his cabals. Nevertheless, it appears to me that it is quite possible to be a statesman without being a minister; and if to have possessed deep knowledge and great skill in all political affairs, to have mightily influenced the fate of a great nation, and to have ruled its rulers from time to time, though without any recognised authority, be any title to the name of a statesman, such a title certainly exists in the case of the cardinal de Retz. Voltaire, indeed, places him as a politician far above his rival Mazarin; and it is probable that had De Retz appeared at a later period, when the state of society had cast greater power into the hands of the people, he would either have overthrown the monarchy altogether, or would have made himself master of the chief authority in the state.

Jean François Paul de Gondi was born at Mont-

mirel en Brie, in the month of October, 1614; and every external circumstance attending his situation by birth, and his education in youth, might have produced to France a man distinguished alike for influence, learning, and virtue. His family, though originally from Italy, had been long naturalised in France, and had been marked by enjoying, at different times, some of the highest dignities, civil and ecclesiastical, in that country. His father was general of the galleys of France, and one of his uncles archbishop of Paris; so that in the church, to which the young De Gondi was destined as a profession, he had the highest prospects of advancement and honour. At an early age he commenced his studies, and pursued them with great diligence and success, acquiring with much facility a sufficient knowledge of classical literature, and that which is of much greater importance to every one, a thorough acquaintance with and complete mastery of his native language. He was instructed also in other accomplishments less fitted for the ecclesiastical state, to which he was destined from his earliest youth, and became skilled in some military exercises, which only increased his natural inclination to an active and enterprising life, and rendered a profession which was forced upon him more hateful in his eyes. But such instructions were not all that he received; and had he been willing to benefit either by precept or example, he might, in the irretrievable years of youth, have profited by those lessons of virtue and beneficence which would then have rendered the great talents which he undoubtedly possessed a blessing instead of a curse to his fellow-creatures. His studies were conducted under the eye of one who merited and has received the name of saint; but even the instructions of St. Vincent de Paul and the constant opportunity of witnessing his virtues were ineffectual to tame the wild passions, or restrain the turbulent spirit of the young Gondi. At an early age he commenced his studies for the church, and was obliged by his parents to take the first steps in that profession into which they

were resolved to force him, although, as he himself declares, there never was a spirit less ecclesiastically disposed in the universe. All his efforts, however, were speedily turned to free himself from the restraint that was put upon him, and by any means that suggested themselves to cause himself to be legally deprived of the gown which he had assumed at the command of his father, and which he was forced by the same authority to retain.

At the age of seventeen, he wrote a history of the conspiracy of Fiesco, which breathes in every line the daring and turbulent spirit that animated the author through life; and it would appear that he took but little care to hold back from the public eye a work which was certainly calculated to impede his entrance into the church. He soon, however, employed more unjustifiable means to cause himself to be stripped of the abbé's cassock. His first resource was gallantry; and he set out upon a course of intrigue which well merited his dismissal from the sacred profession, for which he believed himself to be, as he really was, totally unfit. This was done in so public a manner, however, that the object was perceived, and of course frustrated; although he continued to follow, from inclination, the same libertine course in which he had commenced his career. To the princess de Guimene he remained attached a longer time than to any one else; but he lost no opportunity of distinguishing himself by the éclat of some new intrigue, and might in any other age have succeeded in his purpose; but at that period the morals of the clergy of France were so relaxed, that even the continuance of long and systematic debauchery did not draw down upon him that reprobation which he ought to have met with. His next project was by flight to remove himself from parental authority, and to marry his cousin, mademoiselle de Scepaux, who was possessed of considerable fortune and great personal beauty. By his own account, the young lady, whose virtue seems to have been very questionable, willingly listened to his

proposals, and agreed to fly with him to Holland. In the midst of his preparations for that purpose, however, his project was discovered, and he was forcibly removed from the vicinity, the funds which he had gathered for the purpose of flight being taken away from him by his elder brother.

The next means that he employed to attain the same end, was that of scandalising the church by his repeated duels. The absurd and pernicious custom of duelling was at that time at its height in France, not having as yet been checked by the wholesome severity which Richelieu afterwards exercised towards it; and De Retz at the age of scarcely eighteen made his commencement in a combat of four, in which all parties were severely wounded. The representations and entreaties of his father, however, prevented the consequences which ought to have ensued, and the young duellist was suffered to remain in the church. A second combat in which he was engaged shortly afterwards did not serve any further to promote his views than the former, although he took care to station witnesses himself to give information against him. On the third occasion he combined debauchery and ferocity together; and quarrelling with the count de Harcourt on account of madame du Chatelet, his mistress, challenged him at the theatre, and fought him the next day in the immediate vicinity of Paris. He found, however, that it was in vain to struggle against his fate; and seeing an opportunity of obtaining in his profession distinction of a kind more calculated to gratify his vanity than he had at first anticipated, he applied himself to study more seriously, and gained considerable reputation for talent and learning.

A disposition, naturally quick, enterprising, and daring, together with the disappointment consequent upon being forced into a profession which he detested, and for which he was totally unsuited, produced that sort of reckless and volatile frame of mind which plunged him continually into new difficulties, as well as led

him to a frequent change of pursuits and purposes. The distinction which he obtained by some polemical writings, in which he followed a line which Richelieu had begun, soon called the attention of that great minister, who seemed disposed to show some favour to the young De Gondi. But he on his side, partly it would seem from caprice, but still more from the hatred entertained by his mistress, madame de Guimené, towards the cardinal, displayed a manifest neglect of Richelieu's favour, excused himself on all occasions from going to the Palais Cardinal, and courted the enmity of a man whom other people feared. That enmity, however, was not a little dangerous, and was very easily obtained by those who sought it. Nor was Richelieu long in manifesting his dislike to the youthful De Retz. This was increased by the perusal of the conspiracy of Fiesco, and was still more aggravated by the rivalry between De Retz and abbé de la Motte, a relation and protegé of the cardinal. Both had distinguished themselves highly at the Sorbonne, and both claimed the highest place at the end of the term. Finding that Richelieu interested himself for la Motte, De Retz declares himself that he sent to say he would resign his pretensions to the first place, but that Richelieu answered with such haughtiness as to induce him to persevere. Whatever may be the truth in this respect, certain it is that the contest was carried on to the vote, and De Retz obtained the honour to which he aspired by a majority of eighty-four voices.

The anger of Richelieu now passed all bounds, and showed itself so openly that all the relations and friends of De Retz became alarmed for his personal safety, and joined together to send him into Italy with all speed. His first abode in that country was at Venice, but the consequences of his intrigues soon forced him to quit that city; and after making a tour in Lombardy, he betook himself to Rome. There a new whim seized him; and though he had no pretensions by nature to the character either of a humble or a decent man, he forced himself

to live with decency, and in his apparel and demeanour affected a degree of humility which blinded the eyes of the Roman court. His suite and equipages, however, were splendid; and although he affected to devote himself entirely to the study of his profession at the great seat of clerical learning, he did not fail to find the means of quarrelling with the prince de Schomberg, ambassador from the emperor, and more by the forbearance of that diplomatist than any thing else carried his point against him, much to the surprise and admiration of the papal court. On his return to Paris, which happened soon after, he found his prospects in the church growing daily more flattering to his ambition; and though he had not yet determined to embrace the ecclesiastical profession with real zeal and sincerity, he did not absolutely renounce it, which his age would now have enabled him to do without restraint.

De Retz now pursued in some degree the line of conduct which he had followed at Rome, studying the greater part of the day, and shunning, with some degree of ostentation, the gay society of the capital. His sermons in Paris had been already very successful, and the apparent reformation of his manners greatly increased his reputation. This, however, he could not maintain for any great length of time, as his vicious habits and libertine character were never to be changed; and, after endeavouring to rival Richelieu in the favour of Marie de Cosse, maréchale de Meilleraye, in which he was unsuccessful, he laid a scheme with his cousin, son of the count de Rochepot, for the purpose of murdering the minister in the chapel of the Dome, at the baptism of mademoiselle, daughter of Gaston duke of Orleans. An accidental circumstance prevented Richelieu from being present at the time and place first appointed; the ceremony was deferred, and before it took place the scheme of the conspirators had melted into air. It is but justice, however, to De Retz to state, that he always through life expressed the greatest remorse for

having taken any part in this project. "Had the act succeeded," he says, "it would, at that time, have covered us with glory; but I would, with all my heart, that I had never had any share in that enterprise." And he adds the remarkable words — "Ancient Rome would have admired it; but it is not in that point that I admire ancient Rome."

The conspiracy was never discovered during the life of the cardinal de Richelieu, but after his death it was imprudently revealed by two of the accomplices, and produced an unfavourable impression in regard to De Retz and his friends; for as he observes himself, "There is nothing more stupid than to make people believe you capable of actions which are reasonably to be feared." The next undertaking in which he was engaged was less atrocious, but scarcely less criminal, in the eyes of the government. This was the insurrection of the count de Soissons, to which, indeed, that prince was driven by the tyranny of Richelieu. De Retz had always been a favourite with the count; and at length when, pressed by the Spaniards and the discontented multitude which surrounded him, that prince determined to take arms against the government, the young conspirator was sent for to Sedan, where the count had remained ever since he had been driven into exile by Richelieu. De Retz, on this occasion, appears (at least from his own showing) to have acted with more circumspection and prudence than usual, and in some degree dissuaded his friend from the dangerous step which he was about to take. The advice of others, however, prevailed; and war being determined on, De Retz entered into the conspiracy with the greatest zeal, and believed that at length he had found the means of delivering himself, with distinction, from a profession which he hated. He then laid a scheme for getting possession of the Bastille the moment that the insurrection broke out; and he carried it so far forward by means of various prisoners who were detained there under an easy imprisonment, that its success seemed

assured. But this was not all; with the deep-sighted and cunning policy which he displayed throughout life whenever he was called upon to stir up the people, he made use of some of the most amiable persons for the purpose of acquiring influence with a class which is always most powerful in moments of popular commotion, and was at that time very extensive in the French capital, where long wars, a severe and exacting government, the depression of commerce, and the derangement of the finances of the state, had produced an immense deal of misery and destitution. The class to which I allude is called by De Retz himself *the poor who do not beg*. And by the assistance of his aunt, madame de Maignelai, he contrived to form acquaintance with, and afford a certain degree of assistance to, immense numbers of persons in that situation. Having assured himself of aid and co-operation from these persons in any popular commotion, he returned once more to Sedan, and entered fully into the conspiracy, treating with foreign enemies, and, in fact, committing every act which might be construed into treason against his country and his king.

It was determined that, with the forces which were already in Sedan, and those which Spain was to send to the assistance of the count de Soissons, a battle was immediately to be hazarded against the royal forces, which were already collected to repress the threatened revolt; and De Retz returned to Paris with orders to raise the capital, and take possession of the Bastille as soon as he received the first news of the prince's success. Every thing was prepared, and in all probability the result would have been such as De Retz anticipated; but the first tidings that arrived showed the conspirators of the capital that the count had gained, as I have related elsewhere, the battle of the Marfée, but that he had been killed in the moment of victory either by some unfortunate accident or by the hand of an assassin. Consternation spread amongst the conspirators; but by wise precaution, and honourable discretion on all parts, the share which De

Retz and his companions in Paris had taken in the insurrection of Sedan was perfectly concealed, and was not made known during many years.

The failure of these schemes decided the fate of De Retz; and giving up all hope of finding a favourable opportunity of signalising his abandonment of his profession by some brilliant or daring action, he determined to follow the straight course before him, and to struggle no more against his destiny. He now dedicated himself entirely to the study of his profession, and affected a certain degree of decency of demeanour, though, according to his own admission, his libertine life was but little changed. Possessing powerful friends, however, and notwithstanding his vices, friends really endowed with virtue and piety, his apparent reformation obtained far more than its just portion of credit and applause. The bishop of Lisieux, an excellent prelate and sincere man, never ceased to labour, in order to persuade both Richelieu and the public that De Retz had shaken off his youthful errors. His talents no one doubted; and the conversion of a protestant gentleman of Poitou to the catholic religion, which he effected during some disputes with a huguenot divine, raised his character high amongst the devotees of the court. His object was now to secure his own succession to the archbishopric of Paris, which was held by his uncle, whose infirm state of body and mind hardly permitted him to perform the functions of his office. But an imprudent speech made by the young abbé in regard to the cardinal prime minister had the effect of excluding him from preferment during the life of Richelieu. That speech certainly was as severe as ever issued from the mouth of man; and though perhaps there was some justice in the observation, its truth but added to the anger of the minister. In conversation with the president de Mesmes the abbé de Retz remarked, that Richelieu possessed no great quality which was not the effect or the cause of some great defect; and though this was said in private conversation, it soon found its way, like every

thing else, to the ears of Richelieu. In vain the bishop of Lisieux endeavoured to remove the ill impression which the cardinal entertained against De Retz. The conduct of the young aspirant was so continually opposed, not only to every principle of virtue, but, what was far more heinous in Richelieu's opinion, to all the measures of his tyrannical government, that De Retz could never hope for favour, and might think himself very lucky that he escaped without persecution.

The days of Richelieu, however, were now drawing to a close, and a better prospect of success opened before the eyes of De Retz after the minister's death. Some short time previous, a little adventure occurred to him and to the famous Turenne, which shows both their characters under circumstances very different from those in which they are usually found. A ridiculous prejudice excluded from all theatrical representations the higher clergy of France; and though both Richelieu and Mazarin not only witnessed but encouraged the efforts of the stage, yet all bishops pretending to any great degree of piety abstained from ever visiting the theatre. The bishop of Lisieux, however, though well known as one of the most sincerely religious men of his age, entertained, it would seem, a great desire to see the performance of some good play; and it being proposed to him to make an excursion to St. Cloud, and engage some of the players of the capital to come and represent one of the pieces of Corneille, he agreed willingly, upon condition that the party were restricted to a few. It consisted of the duchess of Vendome and her daughter, Turenne, De Retz, and three other persons. But as the actors were engaged that night at the house of the cardinal at Ruel, they did not arrive early at St. Cloud. This caused the whole party to be late ere they returned to Paris, and it was just in the grey of the morning that they set out. They had not gone far when the adventure to which I allude occurred, and it must be detailed in the words of De Retz himself. "At the foot of the hill," he says, "the carriage stopped

short. As I was at one of the doors with mademoiselle de Vendome, I asked the coachman why he pulled up; and he replied, with an agitated voice, 'Would you have me drive through all the devils that are there before me?' I put my head out of the window, but, being always extremely short-sighted, I saw nothing. Madame de Choisi, who was at the other door with Turenne, was the first in the carriage who perceived the cause of the coachman's terror; I say in the carriage, because five or six lackeys who were behind were already crying 'Jesu Maria!' and trembling in every limb with fear. At the cries of madame de Choisi, Turenne jumped out of the carriage. I thought that it was robbers, and jumped out also; then taking the sword of one of the lackeys, I drew it, and went round to the other side to join Turenne, whom I found staring fixedly at something which I did not see. I asked him what he was staring at, and he replied, in a low voice, 'I will tell you,' pushing me at the same time with his arm; 'but we must not frighten these ladies.' They, by this time, were howling rather than crying. Voiture began an oremus. You know, perhaps, the sharp cries of madame de Choisi; mademoiselle de Vendome told her beads; madame de Vendome insisted upon confessing herself to the bishop of Lisieux, who replied, 'My daughter, do not be alarmed, you are in the hands of God.' The count de Brion, on his knees, with all the lackeys, sang forth the litanies of the Virgin; and all this took place, as you may imagine, at the same moment, and in less time than nothing. Turenne, who had a small sword by his side, had drawn it also; and after having looked forward for a little, as I have said, he turned towards me, and, with the same air wherewith he would have asked for his dinner or begun a battle, he said, 'Let us go and see these gentry.' 'What gentry?' asked I; and, indeed, I began to imagine that every body had gone out of their mind. He replied, 'In truth I do believe they may be devils after all.' Having now taken five or six steps

towards the Savonnerie, and being consequently nearer to the spectacle, I began to perceive something that seemed to me a long procession of black phantoms, which, at first, moved me more than it had done Turenne. But, remembering that I had been for a long time wishing to see spirits, and that I had apparently now found some, it made me make a quicker movement than was consistent with his habits, so that I took two or three springs forward toward the procession. The people at the carriage, who now thought we had come to blows with the devils, uttered a loud cry; but they, however, were not the persons who felt the greatest fear. The poor barefooted Augustines, who are called black Capuchins, and who were the devils of our imagination, were in greater fear still, seeing two men coming upon them sword in hand; and one of them separated himself from the troop, crying, 'Gentlemen, we are but poor monks, doing no ill to any body, and only come to bathe in the river for our health's sake.' Turenne and I returned to the carriage laughing, as you may imagine."

The death of Richelieu took place not long after this adventure; but for some weeks succeeding his decease every thing proceeded so much in the same train that all men imagined, and De Retz amongst the rest, that as he had surrounded the king with his own creatures, the spirit of the dead minister was still destined to rule in the cabinet of the monarch. On being presented to Louis, however, by the archbishop of Paris, De Retz was received with far greater favour than he expected, which increased daily instead of diminishing. The relations and friends of De Retz now began to entertain serious hopes of his obtaining the post to which he aspired; and with much trouble they induced his uncle to consent to his applying for the office of coadjutor, or assistant, in the archbishopric of Paris. This office conferred great authority, and implied the certain appointment of the person who filled it to the archiepiscopal dignity on the decease of the incumbent. The

abbé, however, still found great difficulties at the court; and most of the ministers whom Richelieu had left in power opposed his elevation on various accounts. He himself suspected the secretary of state, De Noyers, of aspiring to the archbishopric himself, although the general character of that statesman, and his extraordinary retreat from power not long afterwards, would seem to imply that such was not really the case. At all events, it is certain that a scheme was formed for banishing De Retz from the court, in a manner to which he himself, it was supposed, could hardly object; and he was nominated to the small but rich bishopric of Agde, in Languedoc. De Retz saw his hopes in regard to the archbishopric on the point of vanishing; but deciding upon his conduct at once with that prompt resolution which characterised all his actions, both good and bad, he went to the king, and thanking him humbly for the very great favour and honour which had been conferred upon him, he affected a tone of humility, which was any thing but natural to him. He represented to the king, that such a bishopric as that of Agde required, on account of its distance from the ca[illegible]nd from all sources of information and authority, a man of ripe years and mature judgment; and [illegible] expressed his consciousness of incapacity to fulfil the [illegible]sk at his period of life, when he had the greatest necessity for good advice and direction.

Although this step was bold, and the chance of preferment thus cast away might, in many instances, never have been regained, the king was not offended by the refusal of De Retz, and continued to give him every sign of favour. By this time, however, the father of the abbé had retired from the world to the seclusion of a convent; and his influence, which was great, both from his reputation for piety that was sincere, and for talents which were more doubtful, was lost to his son in the ambitious views which he entertained. But a few months elapsed between the death of Richelieu and that of his sovereign; Anne of Austria, to whom Louis had left the re-

gency, assumed the reins of government, with a far more extended authority than the king had intended to transmit to her; and, in the first exuberance of prosperity and success, she scattered round her every thing that the crown could bestow, with more facility than discrimination.[a] The friends of De Retz did not lose their opportunity; but finding that any thing was given to any body who asked it, they hastened to demand for him the office of coadjutor. The persons who made the application were madame de Maignelai and the bishop of Lisieux. Nor is it a little strange that two of the most quiet, mild, pious, and virtuous people at that time living, should unite to solicit an office, to which he was the least suited on earth, for a person debauched, irreligious, turbulent, and daring. The queen refused, without any intention of denying; but she made it a point that the father of De Retz should for once come from his cell, to ask the preferment for his son. This form was complied with, and the appointment immediately took place; the queen declaring that the late king himself had expressed his will to that effect on the night before his death. The papal sanction was speedily obtained, and De Retz assumed the title and functions of archbishop-coadjutor of Paris.

Determined to commence his new career with distinction, De Retz resolved to surprise the people of Paris, unaccustomed as they had been for many years to see their bishops in the pulpit, by preaching a regular course of sermons during the Advent. The pope's bull arrived on the eve of All-Saints' Day, and the very next morning the coadjutor appeared in the church of St. John, and delivered his first sermon, as archbishop, to an immense concourse of persons. Not having yet taken full orders, he retired soon after from public life, in order to prepare for the last steps on entering the church; and the state of his mind at this period is well worthy of being given in his own words: — "My private occupation during this time was an intense and profound reflection upon the

manner in which I ought to conduct myself for the future. It was very difficult. I found the archbishopric of Paris degraded in the eyes of men by the meannesses of my uncle, and rendered desolate in the eyes of God by his negligence and incapacity. I foresaw infinite impediments in the way of its re-establishment, and I was not so blind as not to know that the greatest and the most insurmountable of those impediments existed in myself. I was not ignorant of what great importance are correct morals to a bishop; I felt, also, that the scandalous disorder of those of my uncle imposed upon me the duty of regularity more strictly and indispensably than upon any other. I felt at the same time that I was not capable thereof, and that all the obstacles which conscience or honour might oppose to my dissipation would be but very insecure barriers. I took then, after six days' reflection, the resolution of doing ill designedly, which is, without comparison, more criminal before God, but which is, without doubt, more wise before the world; because, in acting thus, one always takes precautions which cover a part, and because one avoids, by this means, the most dangerous absurdity into which one can fall in our profession, that of mixing up sin with devotion."

For several years after the death of Richelieu, the impetus which his mighty mind had given to the government carried it forward with ease, in spite of all obstacles; and during that period, while Mazarin thought the success of all his measures sure, and his power founded on a basis that could never be shaken, he proceeded, from step to step, in a mistaken policy, calculated to give his enemies eventually the power of injuring him in the most vital point. He neglected the finances; he suffered that which had become disorderly to become more so under his administration, and he was compelled, by the consequences of those errors, to have recourse to others; to load the people with imposts to which they had been unaccustomed, at a moment when the burdens, which were lighter by habit, were, nevertheless, fully as heavy

as they could bear. During this time, going on in a fancied security, he showed himself in general placable in disposition, though sometimes the calm was interrupted by bursts of passion, and occasional fits of haughtiness, when any thing occurred to disappoint his expectations or oppose his wishes. For a considerable period De Retz lived with him on terms of great apparent friendship, dining at his table once in the course of every week, and paying assiduous court to the queen-regent and the influential persons who surrounded her. Whether he expected greater or renewed favours from the court; whether he, at this time, had any hopes of the cardinal's hat, which was demanded shortly after for the prince de Conti; or whether, as he has represented it himself, he was carried on step by step to oppose the government, without either disappointed expectations or ambitious projects, — would require a deeper knowledge of the circumstances than can be now obtained to decide with any degree of certainty. His first difference with Mazarin and the court arose in matters of no great importance; but it is not improbable that the influence which De Retz daily gained with the people of Paris excited the jealousy and suspicions of the cardinal, and induced him to irritate the coadjutor by a small species of persecution, which was intended to lower him in the estimation of the populace, but which, being resisted with spirit, had the contrary effect.

The uncle of the young agitator, who still retained the archbishopric of Paris, still more jealous than Mazarin himself of the influence and authority of his nephew, did all that he could to prevent the interference of De Retz in the management of their mutual diocese. But the political skill of the coadjutor found means of turning to his own advantage even the resistance of his uncle; and knowing very well that the archbishop would not allow him to execute even the beneficial schemes that were both within his power and his will to perform, he affected a strong desire to produce a variety of admirable changes, which, even had his uncle offered no impediment, it would have been impossible to carry through in

the state of the government, the country, and the manners of the times. He thus acquired a great degree of credit with all classes for purposes that he never seriously entertained; but in one instance in which he undoubtedly did intend to produce a very great reform amongst the clergy of the diocese, he was opposed and frustrated by the united efforts of his uncle and the court. Of the multitude of priests existing in Paris, a very large proportion were equally ignorant, incapable, and vicious. With their vices De Retz dared not meddle, knowing that he was too liable to censure on the same score himself; but with their ignorance and incapacity he was free to deal; and he erected a sort of court in the diocese, consisting of canons, curates, and monks, to examine the competence of the different priests, and to divide them into three different classes; first, those who were fully equal to their functions; secondly, those who were for the time incapable, but might be rendered competent to the task by study and instruction; and, thirdly, those who were altogether unfit, and whose mind and character afforded no probability of any sufficient improvement. The first class were to be left in the exercise of their functions; the second were to be placed in seminaries for their farther instruction; and the third were destined to be kept in houses of retirement, under strict, but not severe, discipline. As this undertaking was likely to prove very expensive, De Retz applied for assistance to the rich of the diocese; and the general advantage being evident to every one, large sums were eagerly subscribed for the execution of the plan.

The influence and authority thus obtained by De Retz was sufficient to call down the opposition of Mazarin; and the archbishop, who had been absent, was recalled to Paris, and easily persuaded to forbid the execution of a scheme which had not originated with himself. The coadjutor very evidently perceived by what hand the impediments were raised, and a fund of evil feelings towards Mazarin was generated in his heart, which did not cease to exist and to increase to the last day of his

life. Various occasions for mutual contest and opposition presented themselves to De Retz and Mazarin during the assembly of the clergy which was held in 1645; but the coadjutor, in all those instances, with the most skilful sagacity, fought the battles of the clergy against the court, and thus assured himself of one of the most powerful bodies in the realm to fall back upon in time of need.

About the same period, envoys from Poland arrived at the court of France, for the purpose of concluding the already arranged marriage between the king of the former country with a princess of the house of Nevers; and a Polish bishop was sent to perform the ceremony. Mazarin, little acquainted with the rights and customs of the French church, inconsiderately despatched an order to the coadjutor to have the church of Notre Dame prepared on a certain day for the marriage. It was the privilege, it would seem, of the archbishops of Paris to perform all great ceremonies which took place in their metropolitan church themselves, and never to yield the execution of these functions to any but the cardinals of the royal family. De Retz accordingly instantly proceeded with a deputation from the chapter to Fontainebleau, where the court then was; and, after some very violent discussions with the minister, he drove Mazarin and the queen to have recourse to art; and, after affecting to be moved by the representation of De Retz and the chapter, they sent him back to Paris, to wait till the matter had been fully considered by the court. Despatching a messenger immediately to the weak archbishop, who was then at Angers, they easily procured his authority for the act which his nephew had opposed. But De Retz was resolved not to be baffled; and he induced the chapter to exert their privileges, and to reply, when a fresh order for preparing the church arrived, that the archbishop might dispose of the nave of the church, for that he was entitled to do; but that the choir belonged to the members of the chapter, and that they would give it up

for no ceremony that was not performed by their archbishop or his coadjutor. Mazarin, angry and indignant, declared that, since such was the case, the marriage should take place in the chapel of the Palais Royal, of which, he asserted, the grand almoner was the bishop: but this was a doctrine that De Retz would not tolerate; and he notified to the future queen of Poland, that, if the ceremony were performed in the manner proposed, he should be obliged to declare the marriage null. He pointed out, however, that the only way to obviate the difficulty would be for the marriage really to take place in the Palais Royal, but for the Polish bishop to come to him in order to receive a written permission to celebrate it in that place. This was accordingly done; and De Retz obtained a triumph over Mazarin and the court, which produced no benefit to himself, and was never forgiven either by the minister or the regent.

Having thus incurred the enmity of the two most powerful persons in the realm, he hastened to add a third to the number, and to quarrel with the weak duke of Orleans, who held the high office of lieutenant-general under the regent. The cause was still less than that which had already created a division between himself and Mazarin: but De Retz was endowed with a sort of irritable vanity, which made him apprehend serious consequences from the slightest abandonment of any of those ceremonial rights which, as coadjutor, he believed himself to possess. Having determined upon hearing vespers at Notre Dame on Easter day, the duke of Orleans sent forward some of his guards. Their officer found the foot-cloth of the coadjutor placed next to the chair of the archbishop; and, believing that to be the proper seat of the duke of Orleans, he removed it from the spot, and placed that of the duke in its stead. De Retz pretended that, without any personal pride in the business, it might become a precedent of great importance if the coadjutor suffered his seat to be separated from that of the archbishop; and, waiting for the duke at the door of the church, he represented to him his view of the

case; upon which the duke good-humouredly ordered their places to be changed, and suffered the coadjutor to sit above him.

Thus passed the matter for that day: but the friends of the duke of Orleans easily persuaded him that he had suffered himself to be grossly insulted by De Retz; and, being irritated to a great degree, he vowed that he would force the coadjutor to go to Notre Dame on the following Sunday, and sit below him. On his application to the queen, she sent for De Retz, and directed him to make the reparation which the duke demanded. He, of course, refused; and she then made him confer with Mazarin, who used every means to persuade him to comply. The eloquence of the cardinal, had no effect; and, finding that mild means were unsuccessful, he assumed a tone of authority and reprehension. This gave De Retz the opportunity of retaliating, which he did with interest; and, some one having represented to him that the duke would very likely use force to compel his submission, he had the folly to arm a great number of persons in order to resist, and prepared to make the metropolitan church the scene of such pitiful contentions.

The famous Condé, however, then duke d'Enghein, now took part in the affair; and, siding with De Retz, declared that he would not suffer him to be ill-treated. His father, the prince of Condé, became alarmed for fear of a rupture between him and the duke of Orleans, and proceeded to reason with the coadjutor, whose house he found filled with armed men. De Retz was probably by this time ashamed of the whole proceeding, and glad to find any reasonable means of withdrawing from it decently. Accordingly, with some courteous speeches, he offered the prince de Condé, without giving up his right in Notre Dame, to go to the duke of Orleans, and to assure him that what he had done did not proceed from the slightest want of respect, but that it had been forced upon him in

order to preserve the rules of the church. This was accordingly done; and the duke of Orleans, placable, irresolute, timid, himself through life but a creature in the hands of others, received the excuse in good part, and the affair passed off without any more serious consequences.

All these things, however, made their impression: at the court De Retz was looked upon with an evil eye; but the clergy, and especially the clergy of Paris, regarded him as a defender of the rights and privileges of the church; and in losing the favours of the queen he gained that of the people. After having thus menaced and intimidated the court, he thought he had acquired a sufficient degree of consideration to show it a certain sort of patronage; and, at the close of the assembly of the clergy, he led the party which voted a a large gratuitous donation to the king, and, in a harangue which he made upon the occasion, endeavoured to do away, in some measure, with the ill opinion which he knew the regent and the minister entertained of his views and proceedings.

Up to this period in the existence of De Retz we have very little information concerning him, except that which he himself has afforded; and we are obliged to make the actions of his after-life serve the purpose of a key to interpret his own showing in regard to the years of his youth. We now come, however, to an epoch in French history when the multitude of memoirs and narrations concerning the great events of the time furnish us with a comment upon the purposes and character of the coadjutor; and, while his own writings afford an extraordinary picture of his mind and his political intrigues, we are enabled to correct his misstatements, and penetrate his disguises, by the accounts of others, not less prejudiced and deceitful, perhaps, in regard to themselves, but more clear-sighted and candid when they speak of their fellow-actors on the scene of the Fronde. In the early part of 1647, the impetus which had been so far given to all the movements of government by the energy of Richelieu had so far declined,

that the farther progress of the state was left entirely to the efforts of those under whose direction it now was; and, at the same time, the accumulation of impediments which they had gathered together on the way every day rendered its advance more difficult, and required greater skill and vigour in those who now guided it. That skill and vigour did not exist: the burdens were every day becoming heavier; the people began to murmur openly; and even those who did not do so felt the spirit of discontent not less than those who expressed it.

At length, in the month of August, the parliament was induced to raise its voice in opposition to the minister; and the whole feebleness of the government was felt in a moment. The queen regent and her council endeavoured to maintain the authority they possessed; and, with the usual vacillating unsteadiness of weakness, went from violence to concession, and from gentleness to severity, losing at every struggle, like a fish caught in a net, some portion of that strength which they exerted to set themselves free. The part which the coadjutor played in all this business was such as might be expected from his character. He represents himself as sincerely friendly towards the court, and endeavouring to do all that he could to prevent the ministers from resorting to those severe measures, which would irritate the people in the first instance, and which they had not strength to carry through till that irritation had subsided; and he seems to cast great blame upon Mazarin for regarding him with suspicion when his intentions were loyal and good. He passes over, apparently for the purpose of making this statement appear the more just and accurate, all mention of his transactions with the parliament till a much later period. But we find from the memoirs of Claude Joli, one of the canons of Notre Dame, that he had a very great share in all the proceedings of the parliament during its very first opposition to the court; and the canon, moreover, insinuates, though he does not distinctly state it, that many of the most obnoxious measures were attri-

butable to the advice of De Retz. He endeavoured as far as possible, however, to keep up a fair appearance with the court; and his uncle once more quitting Paris, he made frequent reports to the queen and Mazarin of the state and condition of the people. At the same time, he affected every disposition to tranquillise the popular mind; but he acknowledges himself that he foresaw from a very early period that the disputes between the court and the parliament must end in an open collision, and that that collision would produce those scenes of turbulence and disorder in which he took a pleasure, and in which he thought himself calculated to shine. To this he adds, that, such being his full conviction, he took care to preserve his popularity; and for that purpose distributed amongst the people, in the space of five months, 36,000 crowns, upon various pretences. Such is his own statement; and, perhaps, the suspicion would not be unwarrantable if, from these admissions, the immediate result of his actions, and his general character, we were to conceive that he took any unapparent means that suggested themselves to insure and hasten forward those convulsions from which he proposed to benefit. At all events, it is certain that his representations to the court, and his admonitions to the people, tended to nothing but to irritate both parties; and at length matters arrived at that point when an immediate contest between the ministers and the parliament became inevitable.

At this period, as if to hurry forward Mazarin and the queen into some rash act, the victory of Lens was obtained by the great Condé; and the joy which spread through the court party was disproportionate and extraordinary: although it undoubtedly gave them some accession of importance, it did not by any means afford that degree of vigour which was necessary to crush the vast power of the parliament. Mazarin, however, conceived that surprise might do much, and determined to exert his whole strength at this favourable moment.

On the day of St. Louis, the whole court being assembled in the Jesuits' church, De Retz preached an eloquent sermon, containing an eulogy of the saint, and offering very good instructions to the young monarch, who was one of his auditors. For some time before, Mazarin had varied in his conduct towards the coadjutor, sometimes treating his warnings and advice with contempt and irony; sometimes listening to them with apparent content and gratitude; sometimes soothing and flattering; sometimes insulting and reproaching a man whom he had certainly just cause both to hate and fear. De Retz was not one to be deceived by the flattery of an enemy, nor to be led from his purpose either by smooth words or fallacious hopes. But it would seem that the real intentions of the court were concealed from him with sufficient skill to prevent his having any direct suspicion as to what was about to take place. The only open measure which the court proceeded to take upon the battle of Lens, was the ordering a *Te Deum* to be sung in celebration thereof in the church of Notre Dame; and on the day appointed the streets, as usual, were lined with troops while the king and royal family proceeded to the cathedral. De Retz, as a matter of course, performed the ceremony, which took place in all tranquillity; and, the *Te Deum* being over, the court and congregation retired from the church, while the archbishop coadjutor passed into the sacristy to disrobe. This we learn from other authority than that of De Retz himself; and his own assertion, that he had suffered himself to be deceived by the court in this instance, is thus confirmed. Scarcely had he been there, however, a moment, when some persons coming in with great alarm, informed him that three members of the parliament who had the most distinguished themselves by their opposition to the court had just been arrested while the *Te Deum* was being performed. These were the president, Blancmesnil, Charton, and one of the counsellors, named Broussel: the arrest of the two former persons had

been executed without the slightest difficulty, and without producing any commotion; but Broussel, an old man, highly popular with the lower classes of Paris, lived in a part of the city near which all the boatmen and market people daily assembled; and an old nurse throwing up the window, called to the multitude to assemble and deliver her master. A tumult immediately took place; but, before a sufficient number were collected to offer any successful resistance to the guards, the prisoner was out of the city, and some way upon the road to Sédan.

This disappointment served in no degree to allay the rising tumult: thousands upon thousands were gathered together; the streets, being thronged with people who had flocked to see the king and royal family pass to the cathedral, offered the ready materials for popular commotion; and, by the time the news had reached De Retz, the populace were running to arms, with the rallying cry of "Liberty and Broussel!" He instantly went forth as he was, in his episcopal robes, and proceeded toward the Palais Royal, whither the mob was tending. He found an immense crowd filling all the streets, screaming and crying for [illegible]; and the moment he appeared he was surrounded [illegible] the multitude, from whom he was only able to free [illegible] by assuring them that he was going to the queen, to ask that right might instantly be done them. On the Pont Neuf he met with the maréchal Meilleraye with a body of the guards, assailed by the multitude with stones and abuse, and that officer accompanied him to the palace in order to represent to the queen the real state of the city at the moment.

On arriving at the palace, neither the general nor the bishop could obtain credence for their statement; and though the people were shouting before the gates, the queen, who was perfectly incapable of fear, would not be convinced that there was any danger. By this time, however, the populace were beginning to seize upon arms; and the arrival of several other persons who had passed

through the crowd confirmed the statement of the coadjutor, who was then sent out with Meilleraye to endeavour to persuade the people that justice would be done them if they dispersed. Meilleraye, a hasty and imprudent man, having understood that the queen was determined to set Broussel at liberty, putting himself at the head of the light horse of the guard, advanced rapidly upon the people, crying, "Long live the king! Liberty for Broussel!" The people, however, did not attend to what he said, but merely saw that he advanced upon them with the soldiers, and with his sword drawn in his hand; and, running to arms on every side, they attacked the maréchal and the small body of troops by whom he was surrounded. Meilleraye losing patience, and in some degree forced to defend himself, shot one of the ringleaders on the spot with a pistol, which, of course, added to the fury of the people. De Retz hurried forward to appease the tumult; and for a moment his appearance in his archiepiscopal robes seemed to have produced some effect. Fresh bodies, however, came up to join the mob, and the coadjutor being on foot, he was soon lost sight of in the crowd; while a rapid discharge of fire-arms was poured upon Meilleraye and his soldiers, many of whom were wounded, as well as one of the pages of De Retz himself. The next moment, the blow of a stone above the ear brought the coadjutor to the ground; and, as he was rising, one of the insurgents put a musquet to his head as if to shoot him. With ready presence of mind, however, De Retz exclaimed, "Ah, wretched man! if thy father were to see thee now!" The man instantly turned away the gun, and, gazing intently at the man who claimed to be so intimate a friend of his father, but whom his father had never seen, perceived that it was the archbishop coadjutor, and contrived to make the fact of his presence known to that body of the mob with whom he himself had arrived.

De Retz now regained his influence with the people; and, while he occupied them around him-

self, the maréchal de Meilleraye effected his retreat to the Palais Royal. De Retz then, gathering the people round him, led them towards the markets, where he harangued them for a considerable length of time, and at length persuaded them to put down their arms. He next proceeded to the Palais Royal himself, followed by thirty or forty thousand people, still determined that the prisoners should be set free, but no longer armed against the royal authority. Again, accompanied by the maréchal de Meilleraye, he entered the presence of the queen, and endeavoured to persuade her to satisfy the demands of the people, informing her, at the same time, that they had laid down their arms, confiding in her justice and clemency. The court, however, by this very news became reassured. The queen, after giving way to a burst of anger, turned the representations of De Retz into ridicule, and dismissed him, saying, "Go, sir, go and rest yourself; you have worked hard." He accordingly retired, and turned his steps towards his own dwelling, saying what he could to appease the people as he went; and, on returning home, was so exhausted, that, we are told by one of those that was near him at the time, he was obliged to be supported into his own apartment by two of the assistant clergy.

The crowd entirely dispersed, all tumult ceased, and Paris returned to a state of quiet and tranquillity, which, in all probability, did not suit the views of the coadjutor. This was his first essay in popular commotions; and it appears that his desire merely was to increase his importance with the court by keeping it in a state of continual apprehension, without exciting the people to any acts of violence or bloodshed. In the course of that day he had found how difficult a machine to manage is a mob, and how hard to rule it while it is kept together. He now felt how difficult it is to prevent it from dispersing when the momentary excitement is past. From hour to hour, during the evening, several of his friends and confidants came from the palace to the lesser archbishopric, bearing him information that

the streets of Paris were quite abandoned by the multitude who had so lately threatened the city with pillage; and that he himself had become an object of ridicule and vituperation to the court. He says himself that he bore all this without being shaken in his resolution of not exciting the people to any farther sedition; but at length Argenteuil, who had been engaged with him in the conspiracy of the count de Soissons, arrived with a message from the maréchal de Meilleraye, begging him to provide for his own safety as fast as possible, for that he would certainly be arrested the next day. He added, that the court, finding every thing quiet, and the tumult appeased, had determined to follow up their first stroke vigorously; to send him to Quimper Corentin, to despatch old Broussel under a guard to Havre, and, at daybreak, to make the chancellor proceed in form to interdict the meetings of the parliament, and to exile it to Montargis.

The friends who were round De Retz now fancied that he was utterly ruined; that, having let the first impression caused by Broussel's arrest pass away, he could no longer hope for any support from the people; and that he, as well as the parliament, was at the mercy of the court. But it was now that the preparations which De Retz had been making for many a month — we might say for several years — began to take effect. After some consideration, he arranged all his plans, and told his friends, who apprehended so much for him, and for themselves, not to be alarmed on such slight causes. At that time Paris was divided into quarters, over each of which a colonel, chosen from amongst the citizens, was invested with a certain degree of authority; and, at the same time, a quantity of the old arms which had been employed at the time of the League, and during the siege of Paris, by Henry IV., were still in the hands of the people. A number of the higher classes of citizens, who then, we must remember, formed a completely distinct order from the nobility, had been gained by the subtle and insinuating De Retz; and amongst these several

of the colonels of the quarters were ready to obey the orders of their turbulent archbishop in any extreme to which he might lead or the court might drive them. Miron, colonel of the quarter of Saint Germain l'Auxerrois, was immediately sent for by the coadjutor, and with him and some others the whole plan for the commotions of the following day were arranged upon a regular system. Miron undertook to find a large body of the influential burghers, who would be ready to resist any attempt against the parliament or the coadjutor; and De Retz directed him to station considerable groups of respectable men from place to place, in those parts of the city which were likely to become the scenes of action; while the whole of the inferior persons were kept within, but prepared to issue forth at a moment's notice. The respectability of these citizens' appearance, they well knew, could afford no excuse to the soldiery for dispersing them as rabble; and, at the same time, their influence with the people was sufficient to prevent any commotion taking place till the exact moment when it could be excited with advantage. Four hundred of the citizens were thus posted before daybreak; and De Retz stationed a number of his friends, with what followers they could collect, at different important points, for the purpose of directing the mob, and impeding the operations of the royal troops; while, at the same time, directions for forming barricades, in order to defend the streets, were given to the most capable persons of the party, upon the plan of those which had been raised against Henry III. in the time of the League.

Early in the morning, the manœuvres of both parties began: various officers on horseback were seen, reconnoitring the groups of burghers; and shortly afterwards the chancellor himself set out in state, for the purpose of interdicting the parliament. At first, his carriage was only attacked by a few boys; but, while he was proceeding towards the courts of justice, messengers were sent off to take the commands of De Retz in regard to the

farther proceedings of the insurgents. Those commands were issued in a moment, and executed with equal promtitude. Without an instant's delay, the whole of the lower classes were armed: children of five years old were seen with daggers in their hands; women with infants in their arms joined the mob; and in less than two hours 200 barricades closed up the streets, rendered the manœuvres of the cavalry impracticable, and afforded impediments to the operations of infantry, which would have required a far greater force than the queen possessed in Paris to have overcome. In the mean time, the chancellor had been attacked, and narrowly escaped with his life, as I have detailed elsewhere; and the court, somewhat too late, became pursuaded that the tumults on the arbitrary arrest of Broussel were not brought to an end on the same day that gave them birth. Under these circumstances, the queen sent a messenger to De Retz, beseeching him to come to her immediately, and to endeavour to allay the disturbances, which she more than suspected he had caused. The coadjutor, however, with many expressions of sorrow and respect, declared that it was impossible to do so; and begged the messenger to assure the queen, that he had so greatly lost his influence with the people, from his efforts in her favour during the preceding day, that he had himself narrowly escaped that morning, when he had been casually obliged to show himself in the streets. The messenger, who had heard, as he came along, continual shouts of "Long live the coadjutor!" was not to be persuaded that he was as much without authority as he pretended; nor did De Retz wish to persuade him that he was so: suffering him to see that he merely asserted it as an excuse, coupling it with many professions of loyalty and devotion to the queen. "The favourites of the two last centuries little knew," he says, "what they were about, when they reduced the duties which kings owe their subjects to a mere form; for there are many conjunctures may arise in consequence, wherein the people

will reduce to a mere form, also, the obedience that they owe to their kings."

While the chancellor, insulted and attacked, barely escaped with life, and the people took measures for defending themselves against the soldiery, the parliament assembled, and, after issuing a number of decrees condemnatory of the conduct which the queen and her council had pursued in the arrests of the preceding day, passed a resolution for going in a body to demand the liberation of the prisoners. This determination was executed at once. The members were received with vast acclamations, and conducted through the various barriers to the Palais Royal. With their transactions there we have little to do, inasmuch as De Retz took no part therein; and it may be sufficient to say, that, after having been once sent away by the queen, they were turned back by the people, and, after much contestation, obtained an order for the liberation of the prisoners. The barricades were immediately razed; and, as soon as the *lettre de cachet* for the liberation of Broussel was executed, the people returned to tranquillity.

The next morning De Retz was sent for to the palace; and, though the queen was well aware that to his instigations and arrangements was owing the tumult just passed, and though he was perfectly convinced that she was not ignorant of the fact, she did not fail to endeavour to conciliate him by every expression of esteem and consideration; while Mazarin, on his part, carried his hypocritical admiration of, and confidence in, the coadjutor to the pitch of gross absurdity. De Retz retired, perfectly convinced that, as far as the court was concerned, he stood in a more dangerous position than ever; and that no opportunity would be lost of crushing him entirely. It is possible, indeed, that, could De Retz have contented himself with honours, distinction, rank, and even power, he might have wrung from the court, at that moment, almost any concessions that he thought fit to demand: but it was not in his nature to sacrifice the post of leader of a

faction for any consideration whatsoever; and he feared that anything which he demanded or obtained from the court might be used as the means of diminishing his influence with the people.

There are circumstances in which, with great wariness and overpowering mpudence, demagogues may make use of the multitude merely as the means of obtaining wealth, influence, and honours for themselves; and, if they continue insatiable, making fresh complaints, and new demands, as soon as former ones are heard and gratified, they may continue to maintain their influence with the people, while they plunder the court: but they must never be satisfied; for the moment they do so they lose the link of connection between them and the populace. De Retz certainly neither wanted the impudence or the cunning to pursue this plan; but it may be doubted whether the circumstances of those times would have admitted its adoption. He kept aloof, therefore, from the court; though he endeavoured to retard the rapid proceedings of the parliament, which hurried on events that De Retz judged might be more profitably delayed. His more politic schemes, however, were greatly embarrassed by those with whom he had to act, whose minds, unaccustomed to contemplate, like his, scenes of turbulence and intrigue, were afraid of the name of faction and conspiracy; and on that account very often did, rashly and hastily, much more violent actions than his good sense and calm calculating judgment would have permitted, had he been listened to: he remarks upon this state of things himself, that in a party it is more difficult to agree with those who belong to it, than to act against those who are opposed to it. It appears clear, however, that he himself went into the imprudent step of holding some communication with the Spaniards, which, had it transpired at the time it took place, would undoubtedly have dissolved the faction which he used such pains to form; and would have left him, very nearly unsupported, to the just indignation of the court.

So long as he relied solely upon his fellow-countrymen, the multitude of serious evils and grievances that then existed always gave a reasonable motive for strong opposition to those who wished to perpetuate them, a stepping-stone for ambition to rise to its private object, and a fair pretence for faction to pursue the purposes of party: but the least communion with the declared and open enemies of the country poisoned the whole stream of action, and at once stamped that as treason which otherwise, though, very likely, deserving to be marked as turbulence, might have passed current with many for the pure gold of patriotism. However, as we have said, the parliament hurried forward, followed exaction by exaction, and grasped with one hand while it received with the other. This is almost always the consequence of forced concessions, whether just or unjust; and the consequence again of this very effect is to produce in the body yielding a renewed spirit of resistance, which generally ends in a serious concussion before the two powers acting lose their impetus and sink again into tranquillity.

After the first triumph of the parliament, that body continued, as we have said, to exact, and the court in its weakness to grant; till at length, losing patience, the regent carried off the young king from Paris, and left the factious citizens of the capital without any explanation of her purposes, or clear knowledge of the extent of her power. The first news of the evasion of the court spread dismay amongst the Parisians and the parliament: they knew not what measures the queen was about to take; they knew not on what forces she had to rely, and imagination in the vagueness of uncertainty magnified all the dangers of a strange and unexpected position. For a short time every thing was given up for lost, but De Retz found means to reanimate the sinking courage of the parliament, and drive the most moderate members thereof with a rebound to the other extreme. Decree after decree of the most violent character was issued by that body, for the pur-

pose of inducing the queen to return to Paris. Deliberations were held in order to expel Mazarin from the councils of the regent, by the revival of an old law, which excluded all foreigners from holding any high office in the state; and De Retz worked incessantly to detach from the court and bring over to the parliament many of those persons whose real interests should have attached them strongly to the royal cause. In the mean time, the queen had caused Chavigni and several other persons to be arrested; but the vigorous measures of the parliament, the absence of a large body of troops on the frontiers of Flanders, the irresolution of the duke of Orleans, and the defection of the prince de Condé, obliged the queen and her ministers to make concessions, and to bring back the king to Paris.

The fresh triumph which the parliament had gained of course did not tend to weaken its demands; but the vacation having succeeded, gave the court a moment of tranquillity, which was soon to be succeeded by new troubles. No sooner had the bodies composing the parliament re-assembled than their attacks upon the court began again; and after innumerable contestations, which would be tedious to recapitulate, the queen once more fled secretly to Saint Germain, and prepared by force of arms to put a stop to the encroachments daily made upon the royal authority. The situation of all parties was very critical; for at that moment no one could tell who were friends and who were enemies. A great body of the leading men of France were still in doubt whether they should join the party of the parliament or of the court; and for some time before the departure of the queen the most active intrigues had been going on for the purpose of detaching different nobles of great influence from their adherence to the regent, and of bringing them over to the opposing faction. During this time De Retz had of course not been inactive; and although his efforts had been vain to gain the great Condé, he had made sure of that prince's brother, together with the dukes of Bouillon, Longueville, Roche-

foucault, Beaufort, Noirmoutier, Elbeuf, and others, together with the maréchal de la Mothe, and several experienced officers. The sudden departure of the king, however, in some degree took the malecontents by surprise; and Condé having carried off with him his brother, the prince de Conti, of whom De Retz resolved to make the nominal head of their party, had very nearly deranged all his schemes, by depriving the parliament and the people of the countenance of a prince of the blood royal.

A good deal of timidity marked the first proceedings of the parliament, and various circumstances tended to increase the apprehensions of the faction and the courage of the court. The duke of Longueville, instead of coming direct from Normandy to Paris as he had promised, turned aside to St. Germain; the maréchal de la Mothe, who was personally attached to that prince, seemed to hesitate; the duke of Bouillon, who was famous for extricating himself from difficulties, began to consider whether the time for retreating from a dangerous situation had not arrived; and any new misfortune would have dissipated the faction entirely, especially after a lettre de cachet had been received by the parliament exiling its members to Montargis. All seemed lost; and had not Mazarin pursued the very course which De Retz wished him to follow, the party which the coadjutor had formed with so much care would have been entirely at an end in four-and-twenty hours. The parliament, reduced to a state of terror and uncertainty, endeavoured, by the means of persons attached to its body, to ascertain what conditions the court was willing to grant. The regent, supported by the prince de Condé, replied in terms of unmitigated severity, and the faction, driven to despair, resolved to resist at all hazards. The prince de Conti soon after made his escape from St. Germain, as well as the duke de Longueville, and rejoined the party in Paris; Rochefoucault arrived soon after from the south, and the coadjutor saw himself ere long only embarrassed with

the multitude of his great supporters, and the multitude of their different claims and interests. A contest of some importance took place between the duke d'Elbeuf and the prince de Conti for the command of the army which the Parisians were now raising for their defence; but this was at length settled by the skill and perseverance of the coadjutor, though not without great difficulty and danger; and the war of Paris commenced in form. De Retz, in his Memoirs, gives a series of portraits, representing all the principal persons engaged on both sides; full of wit and discrimination, though touched with the spirit of party, and with the strong and vehement prejudice, which was an extrordinary part in his own character, and which led him to attribute to those opposed to him not only actions which they had never committed, but natural defects which they did not possess. These portraits, however, afford too important a picture of his own mind to be omitted in the history of his life.

"The Queen," he says, "had more than any body I ever knew, of that sort of wit which was requisite not to appear foolish to those who did not know her: she had more sharpness than haughtiness, more haughtiness than dignity, more manner than matter, more carelessness of expense than liberality, more liberality than interestedness, more interestedness than disinterestedness, more attachment than passion, more harshness than pride, a memory more tenacious of injuries than of benefits, more the intention of piety than piety itself, more obstinacy than firmness, more of incapacity than of all the rest I have named.

"The duke of Orleans had, with the exception of courage, all that was necessary to make an honest man; but as he had none of those qualities, without exception, that distinguish a great man, he found nothing in himself which could supply or even sustain his weakness. As that weakness reigned in his heart in the form of fear, and in his mind in the form of irresolution, it sprang forth through the whole course of his life. He

entered into all great affairs, because he had not strength to resist those who dragged him thereunto for their own interests; but he never got out of them without shame, because he had not the courage to carry them through. This shadow deadened from his youth upwards all those gay and lively colours in his character, which would naturally have shone forth from a bright and enlightened mind, from an amiable cheerfulness of disposition, from excellent intentions, from complete disinterestedness, and from extraordinary easiness of temper.

"The prince of Condé was born a general, which has only happened to him, to Cæsar, and to Spinola: he equalled the first, and surpassed the second. His intrepidity was one of the least traits of his character. Nature had made his mind as great as his heart: fortune by placing him in warlike times, has given full scope to the second; birth, or rather education in a family attached and submissive to the government, gave but too narrow limits to the first. No pains were taken to inspire into him early those great and general maxims which produce and form the spirit of continuity, and he had no time to seize them for himself, because he has been pre-occupied ever since his youth by a torrent of great affairs, and by the habit of success. This defect has caused him to do occasional acts of injustice, though his soul is the least perverted in the world. It is also the reason why with the heart of an Alexander he has not been free from failings any more than him; why with great discernment he has fallen into many acts of imprudence; why with all the qualities of Francis of Guise he has not served the state, on various occasions, as he ought to have served it; and with all those of Henry of Guise, he has not carried faction to the point to which he might have pushed it. He has not been able to use all his high qualities: it is a defect, but it is a rare, and it is a fine one.

"The duke of Longueville, together with the high

name of Orleans, possessed vivacity, profusion, liberality, a sense of justice, courage and elevation; and yet he never rose above mediocrity, because he had always ideas which were infinitely above his capacity. With capacity and great designs one is never reckoned worth nothing; when one does not act up to them, one is not reckoned worth much; and it is this which produces mediocrity.

"The duke de Beaufort had not even the conception of great affairs: he had nothing but the intention thereof. He had heard his faction of The Importants talk of such things, and he had retained a little of their jargon; and that, with a number of expressions which he had copied faithfully from madame de Vendôme, formed altogether a language which would have disfigured the good sense of Cato. His own understanding was narrow and heavy, and the more so, because it was obscured by presumption. He fancied himself dexterous, which made him appear artificial, because one soon found out that he had not enough talent for that purpose. He was personally courageous, more than is usual with a braggadocio, which he was in every thing without exception; and never more falsely, than in matters of gallantry. He spoke, he thought, like the mob, of which he was the idol for some time.

"The duke d'Elbeuf was brave, solely, because it is impossible for a prince of the house of Lorraine to be otherwise. He had as much wit as a man can have who possesses a great deal of art and very little good sense: it was the most flowery nonsense in the world. He was the first prince whose poverty ever degraded him; and perhaps never man in this world had less the art of making himself pitied in his distress. Affluence did not seem to elevate his character; and if even he had attained to wealth, it would have been envied him as a partisan, so much did beggary seem natural to him.

"The duke de Bouillon was of tried courage, and of profound sense. I am persuaded, by what I have seen of his conduct, that the people did wrong to his reputation

when they decried it; but I do not know that they did not do too much honour to his abilities in believing him capable of all the great things which he did not do.

"Monsieur de Turenne possessed from his youth every good quality, and he acquired every great one at a very early age. He wanted none but those of which he was not aware. He had almost all the virtues by nature, but he never had the glitter of any. People have believed him more capable of being at the head of an army than of a party, and I believe it also; because he was not naturally enterprising; and yet who knows? He had always, and in every thing, certain obscurities which were never cleared up except in important moments; but then, they have always been cleared up to his honour.

"Marshal la Mothe had a great deal of courage; he was a general of the second class, but he was not a man of much sense. He had much gentleness and easiness in private life: he was very useless in a faction, because he was very convenient.

"I almost forgot the prince de Conti, which is a good sign for the head of a party. I do not know that I can better depict him to you than by saying, that this head of a party was nothing but a cipher, which only multiplied itself, because he was a prince of the blood. So much for his public character. Touching his private character, ill nature did for him, what irresolution did for the duke of Orleans,—inundating all his other qualities, which after all were but mediocre, and all strewn with weaknesses.

"There has always been something incomprehensible in the duke de Rochefoucault: he chose to mingle in intrigues from his very infancy, and that at a time when he did not feel at all those petty interests which have never been his foible, and when he did not know those great interests which, in another sense, have never been his forte. He has never been found capable of any great affair, and I do not know why; because he

had qualities which, in any other man, would have supplied the place of those which he had not. His views were not sufficiently extensive, and he did not even see, in one group, all that was within his sight: but his good sense, extremely good in speculative matters, joined to his gentleness, and his insinuating and easy manners, which were admirable, ought to have made up more than it did for his want of penetration. He always displayed an habitual irresolution, but I do not even know to what to attribute that irresolution; it could not proceed from the richness of his imagination, which in him was any thing but quick. I cannot attribute it to weakness of judgment, because, although that quality was not very remarkable in action, he nevertheless had a great fund of good sense. We see the effects of this irresolution, though we do not know the cause. He never showed himself a great warrior, although he was very much of a soldier. He has never been of himself a good courtier, though he had every inclination in the world to be so. He has never been a good party man, although he was all his life engaged in factions. That air of bashfulness and timidity, which he possesses in private life, was, in public, changed into an air of apology. He always fancied that he had need of one; and that, joined to his maxims, which do not display sufficient faith in virtue, and to his practice, which was always to get out of great affairs with as much impatience as he had got in, makes me believe, that he would have done better to have examined himself and reduced his ambition to pass, as he might well have done, for the most polished courtier, and the most worthy man in private life, who had appeared in his century."

Such are some of the characters which De Retz draws of the personages who flourished in the wars of the Fronde; and these very portraits themselves afford no bad insight into the character of the man who drew them. In comparing them with those which have been left by Clarendon, of the men who figured in the bloody

civil wars of England, we shall find, that they want that clear and vigorous firmness, that regular arrangement, and that accurate detail which distinguish the pictures of the historian of the great rebellion. There is a greater affectation of point, but there is more vivacity, more penetration, and occasionally a keenness of discrimination, which may surpass, in some respects, Clarendon himself. At the same time, while the style of the one was careful and precise, the style of the other was, like his life, lax, irregular, and often obscure.

With such materials for a civil war, with a weak court, and a minister very ignorant of the character of the French people, events were hurried forward rapidly in the course that De Retz desired. He himself raised a regiment for the service of the parliament, and in eight days an army was organised sufficient, as it turned out, to maintain Paris against all the forces of the king. In the midst of these proceedings against the court, however, De Retz took care to do one or two of those actions which, while they did not in any degree injure the reputation he had gained with the people, were sure to redound to his credit afterwards with all parties. Henrietta, the unhappy queen of England, a pensioner on the bounty of the court of France, even before the queen quitted Paris, had been so completely neglected in the embarrassments of the state, that her daughter, afterwards duchess of Orleans, had been obliged to remain in bed during a whole day for the want of firing to keep their apartments warm during the month of January. De Retz, who was a witness to the fact, instantly relieved her temporary distress; and, after the flight of the court to Saint Germain, he prevailed on the parliament to send the exiled queen of England 40,000 livres, adding to his speech upon the occasion many a severe and biting invective against Mazarin and that French council, who could suffer the daughter of their noblest king to remain in a state of the lowest misery, in the very palace under the roof of which she was born. His indignation seems to have been sincere, and not

assumed for the political purpose to which it contributed; for, long after, when Mazarin was dead, the coadjutor continued to speak upon the subject in the same spirit, adding the following keen and just observations:—"We are horror-struck, in reading of baseness less monstrous than this; and the little feeling which I have found excited in most minds, by the recital of this fact, has caused me to make a thousand times this reflection, *that men are, without comparison, more affected by examples from the past than from their own times.* We accustom ourselves easily to all that we see; and I believe I have sometimes said to you, that I am not sure whether the consulate of the horse of Caligula (had we witnessed it,) would have so much surprised us as we now imagine that it would have done."

The flight of the queen had been so rapid, and her precautions so few, that she had left the Bastille without any other guard than four-and-twenty soldiers; and it was consequently taken within three days after Paris was declared to be in a state of siege. The ladies of the capital placed themselves in the neighbouring gardens, to see the short cannonade that was kept up upon that celebrated prison; and De Retz, who was thoroughly acquainted with all the follies and weaknesses of his fellow-citizens, took care to employ this spirit on the part of the fair dames of the capital, in order to encourage and excite the enthusiasm of the people and of the soldiery. All idea of danger or difficulty was covered by a veil of laughter and raillery. The disgraceful defeat of the regiment of De Retz himself, who was titular bishop of Corinth, was called the first of the Corinthians; the killed died with a joke upon their lips, and the wounded filled the hospitals with epigrams. With the great body of the Parisians and the Frondeurs, this proceeded from their national character, and from natural lightness of disposition; but De Retz had, evidently, political views both in the pieces of stage effect which he caused to be played off

before the people of Paris, by the mirth and carelessness which he encouraged amidst scenes of bloodshed and anarchy, and by the profusion of satirical and libellous pamphlets, songs, epigrams, and jests, concerning Mazarin and the queen, which under his direction were daily poured forth upon the city of Paris.

In the first instance, the war seemed likely to assume a more fierce and sanguinary character: the queen declared that, as the Parisians were rebels, she would treat them as such; and a cornet of the coadjutor's regiment having been taken and carried to Saint Germain, she ordered his head to be struck off as a traitor. De Retz, however, having obtained information of the fact, gave notice, that reprisals would be unceremoniously used; and, as the count d'Olonne was at that time a prisoner in the hands of the Parisians, the decapitation of the cornet was put off, and he was subsequently exchanged for another who had been taken by the Fronde. After that period, no such sanguinary thoughts were entertained, and, with wise forbearance, all parties restrained the effusion of blood to the field where they met in arms. Nevertheless, it must be admitted, that if ever the bloody laws which have been framed for the species of crime called high treason were justified in execution, such was the case at the present moment. However specious were the pretences of the parliament, however great were the errors of the court, it is an indisputable fact, that every one who was levying war against the crown was actuated by motives of private interest, and that their insurrection was stamped as treason by the utter selfishness of all concerned in it. Nor was this all; scarcely had the war begun, when one of the first steps of the insurgents was to call in the aid of Spain, at that very moment at war with France; and, whilst the parliament refused to admit a herald from the king, a deputy from that hostile power was received with high honour, and listened to, seated and covered, at the bar of the house. To obtain the admission of this deputy

had been a matter of no slight difficulty, and required all De Retz's powers of intrigue; and as he had to play his part against his fellow insurgents, each of whom regarded the other with suspicion, his manœuvres were rendered the more complicated, especially as he feared to give too great preponderance to the influence of the duke of Bouillon, whose interests had long been linked with that of Spain; and who by the assistance of Spanish troops might have rendered himself master of the capital.

In the mean time, however, De Retz, eager to distinguish himself as a warrior, took pleasure in commanding the regiment he had raised; and an opportunity soon occurred for all the Parisian generals to show their feebleness and incapacity. The small town of Charenton, which commanded the rivers Marne and Seine, had been seized by the Parisians at the beginning of the war; and a strong garrison under the command of the marquis de Clanleu seemed to secure it against attack. The importance of this post soon struck the great Condé; and he proceeded, with that skill and decision for which he was famous, to make his dispositions for snatching it from the hands of the insurgents. The duke of Chatillon, with a chosen body of troops, was ordered to attack Clanleu early in the morning, while the prince of Condé himself, with a small corps of observation, occupied the heights of St. Mandé, in order to keep the Parisian forces in check during the proceedings against Charenton. The attack was commenced; and though Clanleu and his troops defended themselves with the greatest bravery, the former being killed after refusing quarter at the last extremity, the royalist forces made themselves masters of Charenton. In the mean while, 30,000 men, headed by all the Parisian generals, and accompanied by De Retz himself, armed and on horseback, proceeded to reconnoitre the position of Condé, but not liking the appearance of that general's forces, they retreated to the gates of the city, without striking one

stroke, either to relieve Charenton or to avenge the fall of the gallant officer they there lost.

The account of this burlesque expedition, as given by the prince de Conti, the generalissimo on the occasion, is too curious to be omitted. "Having held a council of war," he said, addressing the parliament, "to know whether we should give battle or not, it was resolved unanimously not to do so, and not to hazard the lives of a great number of infantry, composed of the burghers of Paris, who had gone out under arms, and whose courage and resolution we cannot sufficiently praise — for fear of making their wives and children cry! if we should have met with the loss of some of them, which, indeed, would have been inevitable." If De Retz, however, did not prove himself a good general, never did man show himself a more skilful politician in his management of the parliament, and of the people who surrounded him. This was especially displayed in the transactions with Spain, to which we have just referred. Had De Retz, as an individual, received the Spanish envoy, he would have placed himself in a worse position with regard to the court than any of the other leaders of the insurrection. Had he suffered the duke of Bouillon, whose connection with Spain was already well known, to receive the envoy, he would have given that prince a degree of power which never could have been snatched from his hands again: but by inducing the parliament to receive the messenger he implicated all parties in the same transaction; and although no advantage was derived at the time to the general cause of the insurgents, De Retz thus opened for himself an opportunity of treating with Spain whenever he liked, without incurring any individual responsibility.

In a body composed, like that of the insurgents of Paris, of a multitude of eager and selfish people, keen and cunning in pursuit of their own private interests, but not sufficiently clear-sighted to perceive the necessity of often sacrificing their particular schemes to the general security, it was of course a very difficult

matter to induce them to act in a united manner upon any subject whatsoever. The whole life of De Retz at this time was, in consequence, one series of efforts to lash on upon the path which he wished them to pursue all the discontented spirits which went straggling away at every step in pursuit of their own objects. His most difficult task, however, was with the parliament; the wiser and more disinterested members of which were labouring already to bring about a reconciliation with the court. Negotiations were opened and carried on with a considerable degree of success, notwithstanding all the efforts of the leaders of the faction to put a stop to them; but De Retz had at length recourse to a plan he had followed often with success, and took measures to raise up the people against the authority of the parliament, not for the purpose of overthrowing that body, but with a view to direct its movements according to his own desires. The conferences between the deputies from the parliament and the representatives of the court were held at the little village of Ruel, and every time the deputies returned, they were assailed by the hissings and hootings of the people, were called friends of Mazarin, and betrayers of the cause they pretended to support. A report was industriously circulated, that the leaders of the moderate party had sold themselves to the regent; and De Retz took care that a faction should be excited in the parliament itself, to embarrass all the negotiations with excessive demands, frequent tergiversation, and language calculated rather to irritate old grievances than to restore tranquillity.

Nevertheless the deputies, who had luckily been chosen in the first instance on account of their probity, their courage, and their wisdom, pursued their purpose with firmness, and, step by step, advanced to an accommodation with the court. In order to preserve their influence with the people, the generals of the insurgent army had affected a great degree of disinterestedness, and publicly declared, in all their speeches, that as soon as the parliament was satisfied, they, on their part, were ready to

lay down their arms, having gained all that they desired; but when the deputies of the parliament found that to their instigations were owing all the difficulties that obstructed the negotiation, they took advantage of these hypocritical speeches to drop all mention of the generals in the conferences, and to demand nothing from the court for their interest or security. Frightened at these demonstrations, the greater part of the insurrectionary leaders imagined that they were about to be made the sacrifice; and, assuming a menacing attitude towards all parties, they fortified themselves in a strong position, threatening to call the Spaniards to their assistance, and to set the regent and the capital at defiance. In the mean time, the treaty between the court and the parliament had been carried to an advanced point; and both the queen's council and the deputies became alarmed at the demonstrations of the people and the generals. In the parliament itself a majority was obtained, for revoking the powers which had been granted to the deputies; and not a moment was to be lost by those whose purpose was to restore peace to the country. Under these circumstances, after a long and animated discussion, in which the deputies from the parliament showed a degree of courage and disinterestedness, which but too few exhibited through the whole course of the proceedings, a treaty of peace was signed at Ruel, by which the parliament obtained very little, except a general amnesty, and sacrificed a great deal. This treaty was signed by Mazarin himself; and the fact of the deputies having treated with that obnoxious minister rendered the majority of the parliament and the leaders of the Fronde but the more furious against those who had conducted the negotiation.

The president Molé and the rest of the deputies presented themselves on the 13th of March, 1649, before the other members of the parliament, in order to give an account of the negotiation which they had just terminated, and a scene of confusion and tumult en-

sued, such as Paris had seldom witnessed. The courts of justice were invaded by the populace; the two parties raged furiously in the parliament itself; and while the different members expressed their determination to disavow the act of the deputation, the people clamoured loudly for the blood of those who, they said, had sold their country to Mazarin. De Retz would lead one to believe that he was guiltless of the tumult which took place on this occasion; but his own account suffers to appear a number of manœuvres which do not leave him by any means blameless. It was one of his favourite axioms, however, that "a civil war is one of those complicated diseases, in which the remedies given for the cure of one symptom very often aggravate three or four others." It is wonderful how often we shelter ourselves from the responsibility of our actions under any general maxim which affords us an excuse for believing that the evil result was more our misfortune than our fault. The scene which took place when the deputies made their report may be as well recapitulated, nearly in the words of De Retz himself; especially as this is amongst one of the most interesting and agitated periods of his life, displaying, in the most prominent point of view, that prompt and ready genius for seizing upon all opportunities, parrying all blows, and, by the mighty mastery of mind, changing the evils of any position into advantages, which constitutes his historical title to the name of statesman.

Before the deputies entered to give an account of their proceedings the parliament had been considerably agitated, both by natural expectation and by the rumours and insinuations which the leaders of the faction had not scrupled to throw out for that purpose. De Retz and his friends had arranged the whole plan of their proceedings the night before; but some fresh information which had reached the duke d'Elbeuf had exasperated him to such a pitch that, forgetting all previous determinations, he instantly assailed the first president by a demand, couched in rude

language, as to whether he had dared to forget the interests of the generals in the conferences at Ruel. The president heard him calmly, and, as his only reply, was about to read the report of all that had taken place. He was not suffered, however, to proceed; for no sooner had he mentioned the word peace, than his voice was overwhelmed by a confused noise, the whole company crying out, that there was no peace; that the powers of the deputies had been revoked; that they had abandoned shamefully both the generals and those members of the parliament who had joined in the decree of union. As soon as his voice could be heard, the prince of Conti expressed in a mild tone, which was but the more likely to irritate his hearers, the astonishment he felt, that the deputies should have concluded a treaty without himself and the other generals. The president Molé replied, that the generals had always protested they had no other interests than that of the parliament; and, moreover, that they might have sent deputies themselves to the conference if they had liked. To this reasonable answer the duke of Bouillon replied by one of those vague but irritating announcements which, without bearing in the slightest degree upon the argument, exasperate the partisans of the speaker, by giving an exaggerated idea of his own conviction upon the subject. "Since the deputies," he said, "had agreed that Mazarin should remain prime minister, the only favour he had to demand of the parliament was to obtain for him a passport, for the purpose of enabling him to quit the country in security." Molè endeavoured to show him that his individual interests had been taken care of; but he, with that interested affectation of disinterestedness which so strongly characterised his party, declared that he would in no degree separate himself from the other generals. Thereupon the noise and confusion recommenced with tenfold violence. The president De Mesmes, overwhelmed with invectives for having suffered Mazarin to sign the treaty, trembled like an aspen leaf; the duke of Beaufort and marshal de la Mothe grew

excited by the tumult, and were carried beyond all the resolutions which they had formed; and the first, putting his hand upon his sword, vowed, with a bombastic air, that it should never be drawn for Mazarin. "Thus," says De Retz, "you see that I was right, when I said to monsieur de Bouillon, that, in the agitation of men's minds on the return of the deputies, we should not be able to answer for any thing, from one quarter of an hour to another. I ought to have added, that we should not be able to answer for ourselves."

The president de Coigneux then rose to propose that the deputies should be sent back again to secure the interest of the generals and to amend some of the articles of the treaty, and the president de Bellièvre stood up to second him; but neither the one nor the other could make themselves heard, in consequence of a fresh tumult in the outer hall, the noise of which made itself heard in the chamber where the parliament was assembled. At that moment, the usher who kept the doors entered, pale and trembling, and announced that the crowd demanded to see the duke de Beaufort, who went forth, harangued the people, and contrived to pacify them for the time. No sooner had he returned, however, than the tumult recommenced, and the president De Novion having gone out to see what was the matter, was instantly encountered by Du Boisle, a ruined advocate, who advanced upon him at the head of a crowd of people, armed for the most part with poniards. Du Boisle, marching up to De Novion, demanded the treaty of peace, in order, he said, to have the signature of Mazarin burnt in the Place de Grève by the hands of the common executioner. He further demanded, that if the deputies had signed the peace with their own consent, they should be hanged; and that if they had been forced to do so, their act should be disavowed.

The president De Novion, though a good deal embarrassed, contrived to extricate himself from the difficulty in which he was plunged with some degree of dexterity; representing to Du Boisle, that they could not burn the

signature of Mazarin without burning that of the duke of Orleans also, who was in some degree a favourite of the people, but that they were upon the very point of sending back the deputies to have the treaty amended. He was thus enabled to escape from the populace, and return to the hall of the parliament: but still the tumult continued; and nothing was heard but shouts and imprecations, while every moment it was to be apprehended that the doors would be forced open, and the deputies murdered in the midst of the hall. "The first president," says De Retz, "showed a most extraordinary degree of intrepidity. Although he saw himself the object of all the popular fury, one could not perceive the slightest change on his countenance, which displayed nothing but unshaken firmness and almost supernatural presence of mind; which is something even greater than firmness itself. He counted the votes with the same tranquillity which he would have done on any ordinary occasion; he pronounced in the same tone the decree formed upon the proposal of the presidents De Coigneux and Bellièvre, which decree declared that the deputies should return to Ruel to treat farther concerning the pretensions and interests of the generals, and all others attached to the faction; and should insure that cardinal Mazarin should not sign the treaty about to be made upon this head, as well as upon all others which should be again subjected to negotiation."

The parliament had now sat from seven in the morning till five in the afternoon, and the tumult instead of diminishing was increasing every moment; but no sooner was the decree pronounced than Molè the president rose and quitted the chair, preparing to break up the assembly for that day. No one of any party within the hall could conceal from themselves that the life of the president, and that of every one who had signed the treaty of peace, was in imminent danger from the fury of the enraged populace without; and even those who were most opposed to him in political opinions, struck with the magnanimity which he displayed in such trying circum-

stances, hurried forward to prevent his issuing forth into the great hall, which was crowded with people thirsting for his blood. De Retz and several others besought him to go out by one of the side doors, and thus avoid encountering the multitude. But he replied, "The court never conceals itself; and if I were certain of perishing, I would never commit so base an action, which, moreover, would serve no purpose but to give greater boldness to the seditious. They would soon find me in my house if they believed that I feared them here."

De Retz besought him at all events to wait till he had endeavoured to calm the people; but, justly imagining that the tumult was in a great degree owing to the insinuations of the coadjutor, he replied, with a contemptuous smile, "Well, my good lord, well! Pray give them the word." De Retz then went forth; and after having for some time harangued the people on the necessity of order and tranquillity, he came back, hoping that a free passage would be opened for the parliament, which now began to move forth in procession, with the president at its head. A thousand acts of violence, however, took place, which had nearly ended in bloodshed. One of the mob aimed a gun at the head of the duke de Bouillon, taking him for Mazarin; and another applied a pistol to the temples of the first president. Molè, however, did not even bend his head, but looking the man in the face, said calmly, "When you have killed me, I shall want nothing but six feet of earth," and walked on with the same slow but firm step as before. His intrepidity overawed the people, and they suffered him to pass; while De Retz and his compassions certainly did all that they could to allay the tumult they had contributed to occasion. It is true, as we have before said, that the coadjutor denies having had any share therein, and declares that the president suspected him falsely; but in describing the events of the very morning in which these occurrences took place, he acknowledges that he had taken pains to disseminate

amongst the people all the most odious articles of the treaty of peace, and all the circumstances connected with the signature of cardinal Mazarin.

The tumult of that morning, however, having ceased, the two or three days that immediately followed were passed in great tranquillity, and the deputies returned to the court in order to reform the treaty which had been so lately signed. In the mean while the generals and leaders of the Fronde themselves were in a state of much agitation and difficulty regarding the steps they ought to pursue. De Retz was of opinion, that while they had the parliament so completely at their command, and the people both of the capital and of the provinces showed themselves disposed to support them in any measures, however daring, they should demand of the court a general treaty of pacification, in which Spain itself should be included; and it is not by any means improbable that this bold measure would have been successful, had it been adopted when first proposed. The duke of Bouillon, however, and various other members of the Fronde hesitated, till it was too late; and when about to put it in execution received the disastrous intelligence that the army of Turenne, which was supposed to be advancing to support the party of the Fronde, had abandoned their leader as a single man, and gone over to the court. The whole faction, however, was by this time deeply implicated with Spain; and a new Spanish envoy, Don Gabriel of Toledo, intrusted with much higher powers than the former, resided habitually amongst them, and was present at almost all their conferences.

The differences of opinion which existed between De Retz and his colleagues were now very great; and it became evident that the scramble for security or advantages, which always takes place on the breaking up of a faction, was now beginning in the party of the Fronde; so that De Retz, whose principal view was to maintain his power, by keeping the party united, had no very easy part to play. His embarrassment was greatly in-

creased by a letter which he received from two of his agents at the court of the Spanish archduke. By this he perceived that either by money, promises, or civilities, his two agents had been completely gained over to the Spanish interests; and while they laboured hard in their despatch to show him, that he was wrong in looking upon the Spanish court with any degree of suspicion, they informed him that the Spanish army was actually advancing towards Paris. The picture which he gives of the state of his party at this moment is interesting, though, of course, some allowance must be made for prejudice. "On looking round me, I beheld," he says, "the parliament less disposed than ever to engage in war, on account of the desertion of the army of Turenne: I saw the deputies at Ruel rendered bolder than at first, by the success of their prevarication: I saw the people of Paris as well disposed to bring in the archduke as they would have been to receive the duke of Orleans: I saw that that foreign prince, with his chaplet always in his hand, and Fuensaldañes with his money, would in eight days have more power in the capital than the whole of us: I saw that the latter, who was one of the most skilful men in the world, had as completely got Noirmoutier and Laigues under his thumb as if he had enchanted them; and I saw that the duke de Bouillon had fallen back upon his old proposition of carrying every thing into extremities: I saw that the court, which believed itself certain of the parliament, was driving on our generals, by the contempt in which it again began to hold them: I saw that all these causes were leading us to a popular sedition, which would strangle the parliament, which would bring the Spaniards into the Louvre, which would perhaps overthrow the state; and I saw, above all, that the influence which I possessed with the people, both on the duke de Beaufort's account and on my own, as well as the names of Noirmoutier and Laigues, would gain for me the sad and fatal honour of all these famous exploits, — in the midst of which, the first

care of the count Fuensaldañes would be to crush me myself."

Under these difficult circumstances, De Retz conceived a plan equally bold, brilliant, and extraordinary, for saving the state, himself, and the faction which he headed; and he was confirmed in pursuing this plan, by the opinion of his father, who had long assumed the cowl, and was now for the first time consulted by his son. This plan was first, in the transactions likely to ensue, to act the double part of doing all that he could in reality to put an end to the civil war, even though Mazarin should remain in power, but apparently to oppose the very measures for which he was labouring; and secondly to refuse all treaty with the cardinal and every share in the general amnesty which he proposed to gain for others. His motives in this affair were any thing but disinterested. He saw that the establishment of the Spanish power in Paris would be his own ruin; and he equally perceived that if he joined the party which was making peace with the court he would lose his influence with the people, and consequently his consideration with all men, and he therefore formed his determination as much with a view to his own advantage as to the safety of the country. The only matter to be examined, it would seem, was, how far the result would be dangerous to himself; but in this respect he was soon satisfied, both by his own reflections and by the approbation of his father. Knowing Mazarin as he did, he was sure that the timidity of that minister would lead him rather to court the man he feared than to enter into a struggle with him without absolute necessity; and the great accession of influence which he would himself gain, by holding out in favour of popular views when so many other persons abandoned them, would be greatly increased by the apparent, though unreal, risk which he encountered. Upon such reflections he even formed one of those brilliant political maxims with which his writings abound; asserting that "every thing which

appears hazardous, without really being so, is almost always prudent."

The tortuous path of party intrigue, however, is so narrow and confined, that at every moment an enemy or a friend may throw in our way some small obstacle which, in a more open road, would be easily overleaped or passed by, but which there proves very nearly insurmountable. De Retz himself had suffered to appear before Don Gabriel de Toledo considerable disinclination to Spanish interference; and on his very next meeting with the leaders of the Fronde, he found that the envoy had employed very efficacious means of gaining over all voices in opposition to his views. He evinced, however, so strongly to the duke de Bouillon that it was his determination to oppose the schemes of the Spaniards, that that nobleman perceived that it would be in vain to press forward that plan to which he was really the most inclined. The only thing that remained for the duke to do, then, was to make his peace with the court; and as this very well coincided with the purposes of the coadjutor, De Retz promised to aid him to the utmost of his power. Every one now acted for himself, and struggled for what he could obtain: the negotiations with the court continued; but the subtlety of Mazarin was a full match for the interested cunning of the generals, and they obtained very little, except a general amnesty and vague promises of compensation. De Retz alone refused to enter into the arrangements that had been made for the others, and, as he had proposed, maintained his popularity in Paris, while he contributed, to the utmost of his power, to the general pacification.

Every one whose authority is founded on so petty a thing as intrigue, or on so sandy a basis as popularity, must have frequent recourse to miserable artifice and degrading duplicity to patch up the lath and plaster edifice of his power. De Retz affected to hold no terms with Mazarin; and when he went, on the conclu-

sion of the peace, to visit the queen-regent, he addressed her for some moments in a prepared speech, without taking the slightest notice of the cardinal, who stood upon her right hand. We find, however, though he does not himself acknowledge the fact, that he had afterwards a long private interview with the minister, and negotiated with him the arrangements to be made on the return of the king to Paris. At the same time he showed himself the patron of all those who libelled Mazarin and insulted the royal authority; and more than one mean and discreditable act was proved against him, which might well have opened the eyes of the Parisians: but, as he says himself, "there are periods when certain people are always in the right;" and the court returned to Paris, by his means, without the loss of any part of his influence with the people.

The first steps of Mazarin tended to alienate the prince de Condé; and De Retz, with the Frondeurs, eagerly embraced the opportunity of soliciting his co-operation. For a time Condé hesitated; and De Retz and his party laboured anxiously to bring over to their declining faction him whose arm had supported their enemy. All the arrangements for overthrowing Mazarin and forming a new ministry were made in secret; but Condé could not yet prevail upon himself to draw his sword against the court, and he soon after found means of accommodating his differences with the cardinal. In the mean while De Retz perceived with alarm that his influence was declining, both with the parliament and the people. The sweets of tranquillity were felt, and the discomforts of civil war not yet forgotten; but causes of complaint were soon found. The money destined to the payment of the fundholders of the Hôtel de Ville was diverted to other purposes. Their complaints became serious; they met in large bodies; chose syndics to advocate their rights; and a person of the name of Joly distinguished himself by his clamours against the court, and the seditious violence with which he pursued a just claim. This was foundation quite suffi-

cient for the Frondeurs once more to raise up that fabric of popular influence which weariness of strife had cast down; the clamours of the fundholders were aggravated by the instigations of the Fronde; Joly, if not originally an agent of De Retz, soon became so. The populace were excited to take part with the injured; and a plan was devised of turning the indignation of the people directly against Mazarin. Although we may believe, from the characters of the two men to whom the disgrace of the transaction is attached, that the original conception of the scheme now adopted rests with Joly rather than De Retz, there can be no doubt that the latter aided with all his powers of intrigue and artifice in the manœuvres which we are about to detail. The wrath of the court against the murmuring fundholders was represented to the people of Paris as having reached a point of malignity which nothing but acts of violence could satisfy; and the discovery, that two or three pensioned spies of Mazarin frequented their assemblies, added to the popular indignation. The people were easily persuaded that the minister was upon the eve of some base or criminal act; and at length, when the minds of all men were excited to that pitch of irritation when willing credit is given to any thing against an adversary however absurd, a piece of mummery was played off, which had, for a moment, the desired effect.

It was determined to enact a false attempt to assassinate the syndic Joly in the streets of Paris. His pourpoint, placed upon a log of wood, was fired at by a celebrated shot called Estainville, who wounded the passive garment in the arm. On the following morning, all their plans being arranged, and Joly having effected during the night a slight wound in his arm with a pistol flint, proceeded through the streets of Paris in his carriage, which passed on by a preconcerted route. At length, in the Rue des Bernardins, he saw his confederate Estainville, and, giving him a sign, sank down into the bottom of his carriage. Estainville immediately fired, and with admirable precision hit the

panel exactly where the arm of Joly would have rested. Loud cries were immediately raised; a crowd assembled in a moment; and, while Estainville quietly slipped away, Joly was carried to the house of a surgeon, who dressed his factitious wound, and put the seal of medical ignorance upon the imposture. The rumour spread through the town, that an attempt had been made to assassinate one of the syndics; the parliament was agitated by the report, and De Retz was upon the point of employing all his art to work the affair up into one of great magnitude, when either the over-zeal of a real but foolish friend, or the skilful contrivance of a cunning enemy, got up a farce in opposition to his own, and left the affair of Joly with nothing but ridicule for its result.

In the midst of the tumultuous proceedings which were taking place in the parliament, a wild-headed officer of the name of La Boulaie, who had served the parliament faithfully in the siege of Paris, rushed into the great hall, and endeavoured to excite the people and the courts themselves to take arms, declaring that the attempt upon Joly was merely the first act of a general massacre, and that the next victims would be De Retz and the duke de Beaufort. The coadjutor and his friends saw that this was carrying the matter a great deal too far, and the attempt of La Boulaie was immediately put down; but the cold water which De Retz and his companions were obliged to throw upon the too fierce flames of La Boulaie served, of course, to extinguish the fire which they themselves had endeavoured to light. Instead of taking up the cause of the wounded syndic warmly, the parliament began its measures in the calm spirit of investigation, which promised to lay open all the facts; and the prevôt des Marchands proceeded in the afternoon to assure the queen of the fidelity and attachment of the city. All this was unfavourable enough; but whether La Boulaie was, as De Retz suspected, really a hired agent of Mazarin, or merely a rash and

intemperate adversary of the court, his conduct during the subsequent evening did more serious injury to the leaders of the Fronde than all the power of their adversaries could effect. Gathering together a few horsemen he paraded the streets, and, ere night, by the aid of drunken carters and vagrant butchers, contrived to create a sedition in the Place Dauphine and on the Pont Neuf. Mazarin took advantage of these circumstances to persuade the prince de Condé, whose reconciliation with the court was but frail, that the Frondeurs had laid a plot against his life, and, after much remonstrance, the prince was induced to send his empty carriages home, in order to ascertain what were really the intentions of the mob. The rest has ever been, and probably ever will remain, a mystery; but it is certain that the carriage of Condé was attacked, and one of his servants wounded by a pistol-shot, and that he remained firmly persuaded that De Retz and the duke of Beaufort had laid a plan for taking his life. The most reasonable of all the many suppositions upon this subject is that which assigns to Mazarin the conduct of the whole affair, supposing that his view was to create an irreconcilable quarrel between Condé and the leaders of the Fronde, seeing, as he did, that the exactions of the prince would know no bounds, so long as he had that strong party to fall back upon in case of a rupture with the court.

Had Mazarin pursued the advantage which he thus gained with energy and courage, he would undoubtedly have put an end to the faction which more than shared the royal authority in Paris; but what he effected by skill he lost either by mildness or irresolution. During that night, and the following morning indeed, he contrived so generally to possess the people of Paris with the idea that De Retz and Beaufort had attempted to assassinate Condé, that on their appearance in the streets the following morning the people looked cold upon them, their firmest supporters shrunk from their society, and their less courageous friends advised them by all means

to fly. De Retz, however, was not a man to be terrified into so unwise a step. He knew his own innocence of the crime whereof he was accused; he calculated a good deal upon the timidity of Mazarin, more upon gaining time, and much upon his own powers of intrigue. Instead of flying he proceeded, attended by a single servant, to the dwelling of the prince de Condé; and, as if perfectly unconscious of any charge against him, gave out that he was come to congratulate the prince on his escape. The prince, however, on his first visit was absent, and on a second refused to see him; but the duke of Beaufort, who by his advice followed the same course, was more fortunate, and carried through the scene with Condé in a manner which surprised all who knew him.

Mazarin in the mean time let the favourable opportunity slip, and while Condé carried his complaint before the parliament, and publicly accused De Retz and Beaufort of the attempt upon his life, those leaders set every engine to work for the purpose of rousing up the faction, which had fallen into a state of apathy so dangerous to its chiefs. At length the matter was brought formally before the parliament; and the friends of De Retz, finding that public opinion was beginning to change, proposed a general insurrection as the speediest and most effectual means of opposing their enemies: but wisely remembering that failure in such circumstance would be utter ruin, the coadjutor determined to pursue a course directly the reverse of that proposed, namely to affect the most profound submission to the law, and—while he gave time for the stream of popular affection to turn fully in his favour without risking any thing, by attempting to take advantage of it ere its reflux was decided—to oppose the first steps of his adversaries by the boldness of innocence alone. It was thus resolved, that he and the duke of Beaufort should the next day take their seats in the parliament separately, he only accompanied by his almoner, and the duke by a single squire.

This was perhaps the most critical moment of De Retz's life; for both he himself and all his friends entertained no slight fears that his life might be taken in the event of a tumult, while he remained unaccompanied by any friends, in the midst of his enemies; and yet it was absolutely necessary for him to do so in order to avert the storm which menaced himself and his whole party. He executed the difficult task with infinite skill, making a short and simple, but powerful, declaration of his entire submission to the parliament, although he might have refused to acknowledge its jurisdiction. In the course of the proceedings he seized upon every indiscreet word of his opponents; he commented with bitter severity upon the witnesses brought against him, who were all notorious felons; he excited the scorn of the court by his contemptuous recapitulation of their names, Canto, Pichon, Sociande, La Commette, Macassar, and Gorgibus, and then showing that they had been furnished with letters patent from the regent, to insure them immunity for any thing they might say or do in the assemblies where they were sent to act the part of spies; he held up to the horror and detestation of the Parisians the base system which employed such men for such purposes, calling them *the patent witnesses of the crown*, and launching forth into a fine and eloquent tirade on the infamy of employing the royal name in such nefarious transactions. His speech produced an extraordinary effect; and when ordered to quit the hall, as an accused person who could not of course deliberate in his own cause, he found that his party was strong enough to justify him in demanding that Condé also should be excluded. He did not, it is true, press this demand, but the very application tended to raise him and depress Condé in the eyes of the multitude. The princes had come to the parliament attended by nearly a thousand gentlemen, and the coadjutor and duke of Beaufort had appeared with but one follower each; but when they quitted the hall the shouts of the multitude in favour of

the duke and De Retz taught the court that the faction of the Fronde was not so completely at an end as had been supposed.

As the two popular leaders, however, were obliged daily to meet their adversaries in the outer hall, from which the lower orders were excluded, it became necessary to obtain support, in case of need, from persons of a higher grade than those which gratulated them on the steps of the court; and De Retz easily procured the attendance of 300 or 400 men of noble birth, who after the first morning accompanied him daily to the scene of contest, and enabled him to make head against the prince himself. Every one went armed to the parliament; every one was ready to shed his own blood or that of others in the cause of men they in reality cared little about; and while the accused pressed forward their trial, and the court did all that they could to retard it, in order to find some means of condemning them, a single rash word or act might at any time have deluged Paris in gore.

Though such was the stream of public events as it appeared upon the surface, there was now an under-current setting a different way, and leading to the direct reverse of all those results which might have been anticipated. In the first acts of this drama the court had been seen supporting Condé in pursuing the destruction of the Frondeurs; and Mazarin, with the wily policy which distinguished him, supported the prince in every act which could make the breach between him and the faction wider and more irreconcilable. Whichever succeeded, the person injured was an enemy of the minister; and Mazarin saw success on both sides. But as the time passed on, the insolence of Condé became insufferable. He not only maltreated the cardinal and exacted daily new concessions of the most painful kind, but he boldly and openly insulted the queen-regent, and, with his brother, the prince de Conti and his sister's husband, the duc de Longueville, assumed the tone of masters of the state, and formed a party, which

was called in derision *les petits maîtres*. He fancied, and with justice, that both the court and the Frondeurs feared him; but he believed that fear to be much more potent than it really was, and, to use the words of the duchess of Nemours, "he continued, according to custom, to outrage the queen, to insult the cardinal, and to drive the Frondeurs to desperation." The duchess of Chevreuse, however, who had lived long in Flanders, and was not infected with the same awe of Condé which possessed all the inhabitants of Paris, ventured to advise the queen to call to her aid the leaders of the Fronde, with whom the prince was now at mortal variance, and endeavour to lower his pride and punish his audacity. For some time Anne of Austria hesitated; but at length an insupportable insult, received from one of the creatures of the prince, fixed her resolution: and that very evening, the 1st of January, 1650, she despatched a note to De Retz, by the hands of the duchess, begging him to come privately to the palace on the following night. De Retz immediately complied; and, casting aside his archiepiscopal robes, he assumed the habit of one of the gay cavaliers of the court, and was introduced to the private chapel of the queen, where he held a long conference with her and Mazarin. Several others ensued, in which were arranged the measures to be pursued against Condé; and the united skill and cunning of the cardinal prime minister and the leader of the turbulent Parisians were put forth both to engage the duke of Orleans in the proceedings which they contemplated, and to conceal from Condé their designs against him.

In the mean time the trial of De Retz and the duke of Beaufort proceeded very slowly in spite of all their efforts to hasten it on; and Mazarin displayed so much hesitation and irresolution in taking the steps against the prince even after they were determined upon that De Retz seems to have entertained a suspicion, that the cardinal was not without hope the two factions of his enemies, meeting daily in the courts, might at length

come to blows, and mutually exterminate each other. At length, however, while the proceedings were still going on in parliament, the princes of Condé and Conti, and the duke of Longueville, were arrested at the palace; and so completely had Condé been made the dupe of Mazarin's artifices, that he was conveyed to Vincennes by a body of troops acting under an order written by his own hand. Consternation seized the whole party of Condé; his wife was ordered to retire to Chantilly, the duchess of Longueville fled to Normandy and thence to Flanders; and the power of Mazarin was increased in an extraordinary degree by an act which he had only dared to commit under the sanction of several of his most determined personal enemies.

In the mean time the people lighted bonfires to celebrate the imprisonment of Condé who had defeated them, and Conti who had led them to defeat. The parliament made no hesitation in pronouncing the coadjutor and the duke of Beaufort innocent of the crime laid to their charge; and Mazarin, becoming daily more proud of his success, which was followed by still greater, led the king first into Normandy, and then into Burgundy, which had shown some symptoms of revolt on the arrest of the princes. All was speedily tranquillised in those parts of the kingdom; and had Mazarin pursued the same energetic measures towards Guienne, a long, though not very sanguinary, civil war might have been spared to France. He suffered, however, a party in favour of the prince de Condé, which had been formed in Bordeaux by the haughty and despotic conduct of the duke of Epernon, governor of the province, and had been nourished by a great many services rendered by the prince to the Bordelais, to increase and strengthen itself, while the dukes of Rochefoucault and Bouillon raised troops, and having brought the young princess of Condé to the south, began to levy war against the king in favour of the imprisoned princes.

The progress of events in Guienne we shall not

pause to trace, except inasmuch as they affected the interests of De Retz. The great object of that prelate now became to secure for himself the hat of a cardinal; and though he endeavoured to conceal as far as possible this purpose, yet it was sufficiently apparent to Mazarin. The hat was to be obtained with ease by the minister, for whomsoever he chose to demand it: but he was well pleased to keep the factious prelate, whom he had gained over for the time, in long expectation of the dignity he coveted; in order both to prevent his acting any more against the court, and by showing him to the people in close co-operation with a minister whom they hated, to destroy his popularity, and thus cut off the sole source of his power in the state. On the other hand, De Retz was not sorry to see Mazarin neglect the troubles of Guienne, feeling very sure that the fire would soon spread to Paris, and that he should once more be in his element of political intrigue. He soon learned that the friendship of the cardinal was not to be counted upon; and divining at once his purpose to keep him in suspense, he determined to wring from his apprehensions what he could not gain from his gratitude. No sooner, then, had the minister, with the royal family, proceeded to carry on the war in the south, than De Retz attached himself closely to the duke of Orleans, who was always doubted and feared by the cardinal. Scenes of artful intrigue now took place upon all sides, which it would be troublesome to follow; but in the course thereof De Retz was appointed by the court one of the ambassadors extraordinary, to treat with Spain upon the subject of a general pacification. The hope of that result, however, having passed away, the coadjutor returned to his efforts for the purpose of retaining his importance by means of the duke of Orleans; and seeing, with clear penetration, that the popular hatred towards the minister, after having been slightly mitigated by the arrest of the princes, was now suffering a tenfold reaction, which was likely to render even those very prisoners, for whose apprehension

the people had lighted bonfires, objects not only of pity, but of love to the multitude, he formed a plan for getting them into his own power, which was only frustrated by the equal, if not superior, cunning of Mazarin.

De Retz persuaded the weak duke of Orleans, that it was necessary for the safe custody of the princes that they should be brought from Vincennes to the Bastille; but Mazarin forestalled his purpose, and removed them to Marcoussi, upon the pretence that at Vincennes they were within reach of the Spanish army. Nevertheless the duke of Orleans was induced to demand them of the court; and thus one of the chief objects of De Retz was obtained, by entangling the duke in a contest with Mazarin, which, while it left to the coadjutor a powerful support at the court, took away from him the odium of countenancing the obnoxious minister. To add to this effect, De Retz induced the duke of Orleans to intercede in strong terms for the rebels in Guienne, taking care that all these popular steps should be rendered as apparent as possible. Mazarin, however, seeing that the course of the war was likely to entangle him in greater difficulties, and finding a favourable opportunity of concluding a treaty with the insurgents of Bordeaux, hastened to take advantage of it; and returned from the south openly accusing De Retz of having impeded all the views of the court, and prevented the general pacification of the country. The coadjutor had before this time received intimation that all the friendly professions of the minister were vain and hypocritical. No sooner had the prisoners been removed from Vincennes to Marcoussi than Chateauneuf had remarked, "The coadjutor must no longer talk so loud;" and De Retz very evidently perceived that this was to be followed by vigorous efforts to repress his authority. To every one Mazarin represented him in the blackest colours; but to every one he painted him in that point of view that was most likely to shock their imagination, or offend their particular interests. To the duke of Orleans De Retz was represented as intriguing with Condé;

to the princess Palatine, the great friend and supporter of the imprisoned princes, he was accused of seeking to make away with them in private; to the Parliament Mazarin endeavoured to insinuate that De Retz had separated himself from its interests; and a thousand tales were circulated amongst the people to excite their indignation, and diminish his popularity. But although Mazarin was, perhaps, the greatest master of political intrigue then existing in the world, De Retz, who was little inferior to him in the abstract science of cabal, possessed a great advantage over him in France, which was, the knowledge of Frenchmen; and although Mazarin knew, and could play upon, all the general weaknesses of human nature, De Retz comprehended and commanded the peculiar weaknesses of the French nation, and, fighting on his own ground, long maintained the field against his more narrow-minded but more astute adversary. He was not without alarm, however, at the progress made by the minister: but now more accustomed to command the people, he knew that he could excite them to his purpose, whenever he could produce a sufficient cause, or even a sufficient pretext; and taking a higher ground than he had formerly assumed, he no longer attempted to work directly upon the feelings of the multitude, but laboured alone, by means of his tool, the duke of Orleans, to produce one of two effects,— either to wring those concessions which he required from the unwilling hands of the minister, or to place that minister in an obnoxious position, in relation to the parliament and the people.

Mazarin met art by art; and carrying the court to Fontainebleau, he induced the queen to send the most pressing demands for the presence of the duke of Orleans.* The intention was evidently to withdraw him from the influence of De Retz; and, as in decency he could not refuse to attend the councils of his nephew and his king, the leaders of the Fronde, who saw him depart with apprehension and reluctance, resolved to furnish him with a demand upon the court,

which, if granted, would increase their power, and if refused, would widen the breach which already existed between the duke of Orleans and the cardinal. The demand which, according to the skilful arrangements of De Retz, was fixed upon for this occasion, was that of his own nomination to the Roman purple; and Gaston of Orleans took his departure from Paris with the firm determination of carrying this point, for the elevation of him who had now become his favourite.

As De Retz had suspected, Mazarin evaded the question of the cardinal's hat, till he had wrung from the duke of Orleans his consent to the transfer of the prisoners from Marcoussi to Havre; and then inducing some of his creatures in the council to take the odium upon themselves, he caused the strongest representations against De Retz to be made to the queen, who thereupon refused to the coadjutor that dignity, which had been, in fact, the promised price of his co-operation with the regent against Condé. The duke of Orleans returned to Paris in high wrath and indignation, finding himself both disappointed and duped. De Retz in all probability was neither; and he immediately determined upon a move in that game of chess which he was playing against Mazarin, which was certain to put the court in check, and which the minister did not perceive that he had laid open to him. It was evident to Condé's best friends, that De Retz had only acted against him upon the principle of self-preservation; and therefore a reconciliation between them was not only possible but probable. The parliament had long wished for the liberation of the princes, and had not scrupled, on various occasions, to testify openly that desire. The co-operation of De Retz and the Fronde was absolutely necessary to the liberation of Condé; and the coadjutor, instead of being opposed by the duke of Orleans, now governed him with undivided sway. Thus in several very important points the position of De Retz was infinitely better than it had been at the end of the civil war, and he had only, in the first place, to manage the different interests of

the various leaders, so as to prevent them from clashing with one another; and next, to plunge the parliament into such acts, in favour of the princes, that it would have no means of disentangling itself, but be forced, in consistency, to proceed to steps that must prove the inevitable ruin of the minister. The first of these objects he accomplished by a long series of negotiations with the princess Palatine; the most honest and, perhaps, the most skilful of female negotiators that has ever appeared. Acting on the part of the imprisoned princes, she displayed in the negotiation with De Retz a degree of skill, penetration, and determination, which set his arts at defiance, where they were directed against herself, and guided them aright, where they were intended to rule the conduct of others. Five, if not six, separate treaties were entered into between different personages, whose interests were concerned: none were aware of what the others pledged themselves to, except De Retz and the Palatine, who knew all. The latter of De Retz's two purposes was, on the one hand, more difficult, but, if properly accomplished, was, as he well saw, destined to restore more than the share of authority which he had lost with the parliament and the people.

These proceedings, however, demand more minute consideration, as perhaps there never was made a more extraordinary display of the means by which popular assemblies may be governed, than that which is afforded by his Memoirs. We must remember, that, in the first place, De Retz had placed himself in a most advantageous position, very difficult to maintain, indeed, but while maintained, enabling him to bend two powerful parties to his purpose: the one fancying it was opposing him, and yet following his wishes; the other, acting under his direction, and only concealing its purposes in order to favour his views. Before the public, and in the estimation of the parliament, he appeared for many weeks after he was secretly united with Condé and the other prisoners as their most decided enemy, and the

man to whom their imprisonment was owing. The court looked upon him in the same light; and he had not even suffered the duke of Beaufort to know of his private treaty with the prince, lest his weakness should permit the secret to transpire. The duke of Orleans was his tool; and all that De Retz openly suffered to appear was that bitter animosity towards Mazarin and the court which he very well knew was the very best means of renewing his popularity. The first step after the whole of the treaties had been concluded with the imprisoned princes, and all the other measures had been taken which were necessary to secure, amongst the younger members of the parliament, a strong party in favour of their liberation, was the presentation of a petition from the princess of Condé, praying the parliament to interfere for her husband, and especially to have him removed from Havre, which was represented as an unhealthy spot. The first president, imagining that the party of De Retz would be opposed to such a measure, only objected to the petition of the princess, that she was not formally authorised by her husband. This defect, however, was immediately remedied: a regular authority from Condé was manufactured in five minutes, and though every one knew it to be a forgery, it was held good; and the parliament appointed a time for taking into consideration the princess's application. No sooner was this known at the court than the queen sent down an angry message, forbidding the parliament to consider the matter at all. The parliament, feeling its privileges again invaded, decreed a remonstrance, and, as De Retz had hoped and expected, the two parties were once more committed in opposition to each other.

About this time took place the battle of Rhêtel, which we have noticed elsewhere; and the honour and advantage which Mazarin thus gained cast the Fronde in general into a state of deep despondency. Not so, however, De Retz, who, confident in his own genius, proceeded to turn what might have been a misfortune to an advantage. He had hitherto observed a great tone of

moderation in his dealings with the parliament; but he took the present occasion of rising, to make a direct attack upon the government of the queen at the moment that it was most successful, and of assigning that very success as his justification for so doing. So long, he said, as the country had been in danger from foreign enemies, he had refrained from embarrassing it by any observations upon the lamentable state of its internal government; but now, that the victory at Rhêtel had removed all apprehensions, he felt it to be his bounden duty to call the attention of the parliament to the shameful and perilous system which was daily producing new evils in the state; and he moved that a remonstrance should be made to the regent upon the disorders of the government. He added a petition to the king, to remove the imprisoned princes from Havre to some more healthy spot, but couched in such vague and feeble terms, that the president Molè was still deceived, and fancied that De Retz, however anxious to mortify Mazarin, was not in the slightest degree desirous of procuring the liberation of Condé. A decree was, therefore, pronounced, with the sanction and vote of the first president himself, directing a humble remonstrance to be made to the queen, in order to bring about a reconciliation between the various members of the royal family; to induce her majesty to restore the princes to liberty, and to secure to their relations, in the mean time, the right of remaining in Paris to solicit their enfranchisement.

This was the first decided step which the parliament had been induced to take in favour of the prisoners; but it was so decided, that all parties concerned clearly perceived that it could never be retracted. De Retz, however, having in view not only the liberation of the princes, but to work out the destruction of Mazarin, did not choose to throw off the mask, although he saw the parliament so completely committed. The minister, indeed, had the choice of two paths, either of which might have given him the advantage: the one, to set free the prisoners himself, after making what terms with

them he thought fit; the other, to withdraw the court from Paris, and leave the parliament to exhaust itself in fruitless agitation. But still, not understanding the character of the French nation, he hesitated upon both these measures; and, in the mean time, De Retz proceeded with a skilful and persevering energy, to hurry on the parliament from step to step, binding it at every movement in advance, by the ties of its own forms, so as to prevent it from receding whenever he chose to declare his views, and appear, as he really was, the leader and conductor of the whole operations against the court. At the same time he laboured, in conjunction with the Fronde, to arouse once more the popular hatred against Mazarin. The carriage of the duke of Beaufort was attacked in the streets at night, and one of his attendants killed; and with whomsoever the act originated, the Fronde took advantage of it to represent Mazarin as an assassin, and to spread a thousand calumnies concerning him. The duke affected to take all sorts of precautions; and De Retz never moved after dark without armed attendants, and centinels posted in the most ostentatious manner. In the mean time, he carried on the war against Mazarin in the parliament by means of a number of the younger members devoted to his interests, who, day after day, and hour after hour, brought forward the most violent and extravagant propositions against the cardinal, which they well knew would not be entertained for a moment, but which, nevertheless, left their traces on the record, accustomed the assembly to hear the minister calumniated in the most outrageous terms, and to listen to and consider the most extreme resolutions against him, which again, finding their way amongst the people, produced the general impression that Mazarin was the enemy of the public peace, and the source of all the evils under which the country suffered. Such were the proceedings of De Retz with regard to the parliament and the people; but, in the mean time, another scene of the comedy was enacted at the palace of the Luxembourg, where the weak duke of

Orleans, the betrayer of all men, and the ruin of every friend he had in the world, under the skilful management of De Retz, acquired a degree of vigour and resolution which he had never shown in any other situation. The queen and Mazarin, perceiving that he was taking part in the cabals against them, sent to demand his presence at the Palais Royal; and the minister in the presence, and with the assistance of the queen, endeavoured to convince him of the vices and dangerous views of De Retz. The duke, however, defended him with more pertinacity than was usual; and the queen growing angry, a violent dispute ensued, which did far more in favour of the coadjutor than all his own arts or insinuations could have accomplished. The duke of Orleans quitted the Palais Royal, vowing that he would never trust himself again in the hands of the queen, and gave himself up more blindly than ever to the management of his favourite.

At length, seeing the parliament committed to the most extreme measures that he could have desired to pursue; seeing the duke of Orleans completely in his power; seeing his own influence restored with the people, and their hatred of Mazarin inflamed to the highest point; De Retz no longer thought it worth while to retain the mask with which he had hitherto covered the features of his policy. But it was one of his great and peculiar arts always to wound his adversaries by the rebound of their own measures. If they gained a success, he was sure to make it produce an ultimate disadvantage. If they attempted to injure him, he made the blow fall back upon their own heads. If they accused him, he made the very scene and moment of their accusation the occasion of a tenfold charge against themselves. He had suffered the mask to drop, it is true; but he had not yet used the power which he had been gathering together, when the court, awakened to his views, determined to try if it could not break the bonds by which he had so skilfully bound the parliament to his purposes; and on the 4th of

February, 1651, when that body was assembled for the purpose of considering a new attack upon the minister, the master of the ceremonies appeared, and commanded its presence, by deputies, at the Palais Royal. The parliament obeyed; and on the return of the deputies, the first president read a document (or rather a manifesto) which had been given him by the queen, and in which the coadjutor was accused of almost every state crime, and of intentions still more diabolical than the actions which were attributed to him.

De Retz believes not only that the whole business was designed with the knowledge of the first president, who now saw that, with all his wisdom, he had been made a tool by the Fronde; but that he intended to treat the queen's manifesto as a regular accusation against the coadjutor, and, by putting him upon some sort of trial, relieve the court, for a time at least, from his presence in the parliament. The manœuvre was not badly conceived, but it was most feebly executed: the paper itself was drawn up in language both gross and absurd; the members of the parliament attached to the court were intimidated by the shouts of the people without; each expressed his opinion under the evident influence of terror. One advised public prayers for the safety of the country; another besought the duke of Orleans to superintend the affairs of state; and others, again, forgot the question altogether, and rambled into long discussions totally irrelevant and needless. De Retz, however, determined to cast back the accusation upon him who had made it, and to choose that very moment for proposing the most violent and comprehensive measure against Mazarin which any one had yet dared to lay before the parliament. His speech on this occasion is remarkable, not alone from its brevity and vigour, but also because he therein forged a Latin quotation, which was sought, for many days, in the writings of Sallust and other Roman historians. "If the respect which I feel," he said, "for the gentlemen who have spoken before me did not put

a restraint upon my tongue, I should be tempted to complain that none of them have taken indignant notice of that trumpery paper which has just been read in this place against all form and order, and which bears the impress of the same character by which the sacred name of the king was employed to invigorate *the patent witnesses* upon a late occasion. I imagine that they have looked upon this libel, which is, in fact, merely a sally of fury on the part of the cardinal Mazarin, as something too much below either their notice or mine. In order to follow their example in this respect, I shall only reply to it by a passage from one of the ancients, which just comes into my head. *In evil times, I have never abandoned my country; in good times, I have never had my own interests in view; and in desperate times, I have never feared.* I beg pardon for the liberty I have taken in quitting, by these few words, the original subject on which we were met to deliberate. My vote is, to make humble remonstrance to his majesty the king, to supplicate him to send immediately a *lettre de cachet* for the liberation of the princes, with a declaration in their favour, and to drive from his person and his councils the cardinal Mazarin. My opinion is farther, gentlemen, that the parliament should take the resolution to-day of meeting again on Monday next, to receive the reply which his majesty may please to make to the deputies sent with this remonstrance."

The effect of all De Retz's manœuvres was now apparent. To every one of the principles developed in his resolutions the parliament had already committed itself, and could not now refuse to give them voice. His motion passed unanimously; and the very means which Mazarin took to impede the proceedings of De Retz only tended to hasten them, to aggravate them, and to insure their success. The party of the court was now almost driven to despair; but at that moment, the count de Brienne, one of the secretaries of state, appeared, and, in the name of the queen, publicly besought the duke of Orleans to come once more to the council of regency,

and to aid with his advice in the present exigency of the state. De Retz knew the weakness of the duke too well to trust him; but the difficulty was, how to prevent him from acceding, when thus publicly entreated by his sovereign. Many of the most eminent members of the parliament, too, joined their voices to that of Brienne: the first president, though bound to support the decree of the parliament, and executing that duty with firmness and eloquence, made use of the very resolution which had just passed as an argument to induce the duke to yield to the request of the regent, and give her his counsel in the present extremity. Omer Talon, the advocate-general, made one of the most splendid extemporaneous speeches in the records of eloquence, and went on his knees before the duke, beseeching him to save the state. The whole chamber was affected; the duke of Orleans hesitated, and declared he would do what the parliament advised; but at that moment De Retz stepped in, put a false interpretation upon the duke's words, which he was weak enough to avow as his real meaning; and the reply sent back to the regent by Brienne was, that the duke would pay his humble respects to the queen as soon as the princes should be set at liberty, and the cardinal Mazarin driven from the person and the councils of the king.

The only alternative left for the unhappy Anne of Austria was, to call the troops to her aid, and resist the dictation of her son's subjects by force of arms: but it was very doubtful whether the troops would obey her commands; and where were the generals that should have commanded her armies? She yielded unwillingly to her fate, and with great reluctance she suffered Mazarin to quit Paris and retire to St. Germain. She then made two attempts to avoid the absolute expulsion of her minister from the realm. She at first endeavoured to gain an interview with the duke of Orleans: but in this she was again frustrated by De Retz; and shortly after she laid a scheme for quitting Paris with the young king, but the watchful vigilance of the coadjutor again

disappointed her. The people were armed, the Palais Royal was surrounded, and the queen was obliged to abandon her design. A declaration that she would never recall Mazarin was forced from her, and the parliament banished him from the realm. All had hitherto gone well with the schemes of the coadjutor. He had delivered the princes; he had driven his enemy from the ministry and the country; he had, in fact, compelled or persuaded all parties to serve his views and he had ruled the state. But from the moment that Condé returned to the capital he felt that he had set free an enemy more dangerous than any who had gone before. The prince was easily gained over by the queen. He aided to dissolve the assembly of nobles, which had been called for the purpose of procuring his own liberation, but had proceeded to examine the evils of the state; and he broke off the marriage which De Retz had stipulated between the prince de Conti and his own mistress, mademoiselle de Chevreuse.

The coadjutor now prepared to resist; and feared not, supported by the people, a large body of the parliament, and the duke of Orleans, to encounter all the power of Condé and the queen. He counted, however, on a broken reed who leaned upon the duke of Orleans. The timidity and irresolution of that prince rendered him unequal to the task of supporting any one. He had dared to attack Mazarin, though upheld by the queen; but he dared not oppose the queen, upheld by Condé. De Retz counselled vigorous measures, which Gaston was afraid to follow. It became irksome to the duke to refuse, and painful to be pressed every day to energy and firmness which he never did possess. At the same time the queen courted him; and Condé softened towards him his demeanour as much as his haughty nature permitted. De Retz saw that the duke was weary of him. The duke of Beaufort also was gained by the princes, and the position of the coadjutor became perilous in the extreme. His resolution was speedily taken, though it was an extraordinary one, and

executed with vigorous determination, though the potent arms of ridicule were exercised against it by all the court. He announced publicly to the duke of Orleans and to the prince de Condé his determination of retiring entirely from political life, and dedicating himself exclusively to the duties of his profession. The duke of Orleans was overjoyed, as he was on all occasions at every thing which relieved him from an embarrassment; and Condé was perhaps not displeased, although he treated the matter with his usual haughty levity.

Following up this determination, the coadjutor retired to the archiepiscopal palace, where he shut himself up as in a hermitage, visited no more the court, appeared no more in the parliament, but was only seen by the people in the zealous exercise of his functions, and on occasions when he could display the affectation of a deep devotion. De Retz, however, either assumed or felt some fear for his personal security. He knew that, though Condé pretended to laugh at him, that prince considered him as dangerous to his power. He knew that the queen, though she had at one time employed him, had always detested him; and he knew that the duke of Orleans, though he had promised him the most powerful protection in his retreat, would abandon him on the first danger, or for the first advantage. Under these circumstances, he trusted alone to the people, knowing well, that neither vice, nor inconsistency, nor selfishness, nor crime, have the slightest effect whatsoever upon popularity; and that although he might, perhaps, have declined in public favour for a time, the same skill, impudence, and energy, which had first acquired the favour of the people, would regain it whenever he chose to exert himself. In case of any attempt upon his personal liberty, however, some time would be required, to enable the populace to come to his rescue; and he therefore made preparations for defending himself in his palace, hired a number of deter-

mined soldiers, changed the neighbouring houses into barracks, and transformed the cathedral into an arsenal.

No attempt upon him, however, was made, either by the prince of Condé or the court; and in the mean while the popularity of De Retz increased in the most extraordinary degree, in consequence of the exertions of the priests and curates, who lauded him as a saint, not only in the pulpit but in the private visitations of families: and all the influence which the catholic clergy possess was exerted to create for their leader that powerful party in Paris, which would once more enable him to make head against his enemies. Those enemies in the mean time were also working out his ends, as he had anticipated, by their quarrels with each other. Condé, left in undisputed possession of the field, though he affected in some degree to court the people, and did bend his proud spirit to fawn upon the parliament, held no measures either with the queen or with the duke of Orleans. He stimulated the parliament, which he commanded, to pursue all the friends and servants of Mazarin with the most virulent activity; and while he harassed the court by such proceedings, he carried on with the queen a treaty exacting from her concessions which had never yet been granted by any French ruler to any subject whatsoever. Day by day he increased in his demands, till, had they been granted, nothing would have been left to the king but the shadow of royalty in his own dominions.

All that these excessive grants were destined to purchase was the return of Mazarin; but, as we have shown elsewhere, that minister opposed most vigorously and successfully the purposes of the queen in his own favour; advising the regent rather to call to her councils the coadjutor, and give him the place of prime minister, than to grant to Condé conditions which would invest him with almost royal authority. His letter upon this subject determined the proceedings of Anne of Austria. She sent privately for the coadjutor, who had an interview with her at night; in which she besought him to recon-

cile himself sincerely to Mazarin, employing all the eloquence of a woman, all the authority of a queen, and all the arts of a coquette to induce him to comply with her request. De Retz, however, knew too well the game he had to play to yield to her request entirely, although it was perfectly consonant to his views and wishes to drive the exacting prince of Condé from Paris, to reconcile the duke of Orleans and the queen, and ultimately, if he could obtain advantageous terms for so doing, to recall Mazarin himself to the ministry.

Finding that she could not succeed in bringing about an open reconciliation between Mazarin and the coadjutor, Anne of Austria offered the latter the cardinal's hat, and the office of prime minister. The latter office De Retz however declined, knowing that it would have been granted but for a time, and withdrawn as soon as Mazarin could be safely restored to power: with regard to the hat, however, he had no such scruples; and it was in the end agreed, that although he should keep up the appearance of animosity towards the cardinal, he should smooth his return by expelling Condé from Paris, and bringing over the duke of Orleans to the views of the queen. The princess Palatine, who had only agreed to use her influence for the princes while in prison, so far as to obtain their liberty, had now again attached herself to Anne of Austria, and was perhaps indignant at perceiving that Condé so far abused the advantages which she had been instrumental in gaining for him. Through her mediation, all the minute arrangements between De Retz and the queen were carried on; and he, finding that his power with the people was thoroughly restored, that a great part of the parliament itself was fatigued and disgusted with the haughty exactions of Condé, and that the duke of Orleans was sick of the tyranny of his daring cousin, proceeded immediately to give his operations that direction which might bring about the views of the court, without appearing to be directly implicated in the recall of Mazarin.

Issuing from the manufactory of libels and satires at

the archbishopric, a torrent of rumours and insinuations was poured forth upon the Parisian world, imputing to the prince of Condé every sort of evil intention against the state and the country. By these means the public mind was prepared for an inundation of tracts, papers, ballads, and manifestoes, which followed; and as soon as he learned that these measures had been perfectly successful, and that the Parisian public were thoroughly convinced, the prince — for whose imprisonment and for whose deliverance they had lighted equal bonfires; whom they had hooted and gratulated with similar energy, but whom they had lately followed with admiring wonder — was an insolent tyrant, and intended very soon to become a pernicious traitor, De Retz issued forth from his solitude, and, for the first time for some months, took his place in the parliament. The prince of Condé followed a few moments after, and, seeing that the war was about to begin, he determined to seize what he considered the vantage-ground, and to urge forward the parliament upon the subject of its unabated hatred to Mazarin. The hatred of the parliament was unabated; but it had been pushed very nearly as far as it was possible.

Perhaps De Retz, had he wished it, coming forth with renewed popularity, might have been able to carry through those measures, in which Condé, now beginning to be suspected, failed entirely. Not even De Retz, however, dared to have said one word in favour of Mazarin; and if Condé thought, by pushing forward a new attack upon the absent minister, that he would drive his opponent to such a false step, he very much mistook the deep policy of the coadjutor. The prince's speech began with a more violent tirade against Mazarin than ever, and ended by pointing out that the three sub-ministers, as they were called, Le Tellier, Servien, and Lyonne, merely followed the directions which were received from the cardinal; so that, in fact, he governed France as much from his place of exile as he had done in Paris. He then went on to move a resolution, by which

the three whom he named were marked for expulsion from the council. De Retz skilfully avoided the trap that was laid for him: he declaimed eloquently against Mazarin, and boldly declared that it was necessary to take every step which would shut him out for ever from the ministry. He did not even attempt to defend the sub-ministers, or to say one word in their favour; but knowing that the parliament was weary of the dictation of Condé, and would do any thing, which did not imply a retraction, to fall into more moderate views, he pointed out that the queen having done much to gratify the parliament on all essential points, it was an unworthy exercise of its influence to harass her government, by continually attacking the details.

The speech of De Retz gave great pleasure to all those members of the parliament who were opposed to Condé, either from political considerations, or from moderation of feeling. The opinion of the coadjutor was adopted by a great majority; the resolution proposed by the prince was lost; and from that time Condé found that his command over the parliament was at an end. He did occasionally succeed in his measures, however; and it happened, unfortunately for Mazarin, that the proof of very considerable sums having been despatched to him from Paris, with a strong presumption that they proceeded from the funds of the state, fell into the hands of Condé, and were brought before the parliament. The schemes of De Retz seemed on the point of failing; and so great was the apprehension, both of the queen and of the cardinal, that very thinly veiled proposals for assassinating the prince were current in the councils of the regent. This purpose was concealed from the eyes of the queen's conscience by the pretence of arresting the prince; but, as the plan for so doing was such that it could not have been effected without resistance on his part and violence on that of the court, the death of Condé would have been an inevitable consequence of the attempt. De Retz suggested a milder and more feasible scheme for obtaining possession of the person of his

enemy, and proposed to inveigle him to the palace of the Luxembourg, and arrest him there while in conversation with the duke of Orleans. The queen and her counsellors hesitated between the two; and in the mean while some one — it is supposed one of the ministers themselves — revealed to Condé a sufficient portion of the schemes which had been conceived against him, to show him that his life or his liberty were in imminent danger, and he quitted Paris for Saint Maur.

The first rumour of this flight caused a great sensation in the capital. The prince of Conti proceeded in person to the parliament, to assign the reasons for his brother's departure; but there was a coolness even in the assembly which had so long shown itself devoted to his service. Amongst the people, his imprisonment at Vincennes, and the familiarity in which he had lived with the populace since his liberation, had totally destroyed the awe with which he was once regarded; while the breach of his engagements with the Fronde had equally impaired his reputation for integrity. Thus, while all remained quiet in Paris, few if any persons of importance proceeded to visit him at St. Maur; and Condé, mortified and surprised, desired eagerly to return to Paris, where he imagined his influence would revive. Under these circumstances, the duke of Orleans, who, like an aspen leaf, wavered with every wind, and trembled with every storm, guaranteed to Condé his safety if he came back. Though the assurance was a frail one, the prince did not hesitate, and, re-appearing in Paris, used every means, justifiable and unjustifiable, either to seduce or overawe the parliament. Proceeding to the chambers, with more than a thousand followers, hiring the lowest and the basest of the multitude to insult and assault the opposite party, he endeavoured to play off against the court supported by the coadjutor, the same measures which the coadjutor had employed against the court supported by Condé. But, a complete master of faction and intrigue of every kind, De Retz knew no equal with his own weapons; and the contest for supe-

riority was at length brought to a close by a memorable sitting of the parliament on the 21st of August, 1651.

The queen had brought against Condé a charge amounting to high treason; and, with her passions excited against him to their highest pitch of fury, declared that either he or she should perish. Condé defended himself and recriminated; and the 21st of August was appointed by the parliament, for examining more particularly the charge and refutation. Each party looked upon this as the crisis of its fate, and prepared to meet the collision, not by the peaceable means of law, which as well as justice both knew to be utterly out of the question, but in arms, in the midst of Paris, and in the very halls of the parliament itself. In this sort of contest, however, De Retz was superior to Condé, and in the present instance was beforehand with him. Although he could not prevent the entrance of the prince and his friends into the courts of law, he caused those spacious halls to be nearly filled at an early hour by his armed supporters; he stored the closets of the refreshment rooms with hand grenades; and he arranged his forces so as to command all the important points, and to take his enemy every where at a disadvantage.

Shortly after the arrival of the coadjutor, Condé made his appearance, followed by a multitude of veteran officers, and high words almost proceeding to actual violence instantly began between him and De Retz. The first blow struck would have deluged the courts of justice with human blood; and it is probable that the fury, spreading thence to the people without, would have ended in a general pillage and massacre throughout the capital. But the first president and the elder and wiser counsellors threw themselves between the prince and the prelate, and by their eloquence and zeal contrived to make them in some degree ashamed of the criminal acts to which they were both hurrying forward. Condé and De Retz both agreed to dismiss the dangerous multitude that followed them; and De Retz proceeded to the hall without, for the purpose of informing

his friends of the determination which had been taken. As he returned, however, in passing through the folding doors which stood ajar between the great chamber of the parliament and the hall, the duke of Rochefoucault suddenly shut them to upon him, and holding him between them, as in a vice, called out to the followers of Condé, "Kill him! kill him!" From this perilous situation he was delivered by the son of the first president, his personal enemy, but a friend to justice and fair dealing. De Retz was saved, but what had taken place was quite enough to cause confusion. In a moment, 4000 swords were drawn from their scabbards; and had not the old marquis de Crenan, captain of the prince of Condé's guards, wisely remembered, that the life both of the prince and the coadjutor was at stake, and by a cry of "Shame!" induced the rest to forbear, bloodshed must have inevitably been the consequence. In such tumultuous proceedings the morning passed: the parliament rose at an early hour; and all parties returned home with a feeling of shame and sorrow for crimes which had been devised but not executed — crimes which vanity was not permitted to justify to themselves, and the magnitude of which, as well as the fearful results which must have ensued, was exposed to their eyes in the moment of calm consideration that followed after the storm of excited passion had passed by.

The prince of Condé still continued to press the parliament, either to oblige the queen to retract her accusation, or to put him on his trial; and for several days a warfare of the most pitiful intrigue took place: the parliament beseeching the queen to tranquillise the existing differences in the royal family by moderation; the queen endeavouring to find means of avoiding any declaration in favour of Condé; De Retz persuading the duke of Orleans to absent himself from Paris, in order to favour the queen's views; and Condé himself growing more and more fatigued every day with his false position, as leader of a faction, and seeking anxiously to retire from the war of intrigue for which he was

unfitted. The advice of Mazarin, however, induced the queen to soften her expressions towards the prince; and at length, on the young king's reaching the age of his majority, a declaration was issued, announcing, distinctly, that the charge which had been brought against Condé was founded in a mistake. Efforts were then made to induce him to return to the court; but he doubted the intentions of the regent: he found that his popularity in Paris was gone; his friends had been expelled from the council; the duke of Orleans was too well known to be trusted in any thing; and, after hovering round Paris for some time, Condé retired, with the purpose of seeking Guienne, the government of which province had been offered to him with great advantages. Some accidental circumstances on the road, however, induced him to believe that the intentions of the court were unfavourable to him, and that some troops had been sent out for the purpose of arresting him. A body of factious friends who accompanied him seized the occasion; and in an evil moment Condé was persuaded to raise the standard of civil war.

In the mean time De Retz was playing in Paris a part to which he was unaccustomed, but which appeared for a time to be very successful. It had been stipulated when he gave his influence to the queen, that the rank of cardinal should be obtained for him from Rome, and that matter was proceeding as he could wish; but the ecclesiastical dignity was only a stepping-stone to his ambition, which aimed at the more substantial elevation of prime minister. The measures which he took to obtain that situation were curious and not wise: he entered upon a species of intrigue in which he had been wonderfully successful, so long as pleasure was the only object, and the gratification of sensual passion was alone the purpose that he had in view: but the moment that he made gallantry the ladder to ambition, he entered upon an art in which every woman was superior to him, and was, for the first time in his life, thoroughly duped by the very means which he had chosen to employ himself.

Although a remarkably ugly man, he had been, as is so frequently the case, much more successful in his criminal amours than many of the more graceful and splendid nobles of the French court; and in his frequent nightly conferences with the queen he conceived the vain hope of making an impression on the heart of Anne of Austria herself; not perhaps expecting to succeed with the regent, as he had done with many of the highest women of the court, but at all events believing that her vanity would be flattered by the conquest she had made, and that he might owe to feelings of affection that high post which he had not been able to wring from her by faction and violence.

The idea of affecting love towards the queen, and of taking advantage of their frequent private interviews to make her sensible of the effect which he wished her to believe she had produced, was first suggested to him by the duchess de Chevreuse; and there may be a doubt, though no historian seems to have entertained it, whether that intriguing woman was playing the game of De Retz, and attempting to deceive the queen, or playing the game of the queen and thoroughly misleading De Retz. At all events it is clear that Anne of Austria saw the views of the coadjutor; and finding herself at once engaged with him in the practice of an art where she was his superior, she led him blindly on, with hopes that she had not the slightest intention of realising, till he permitted her to carry the court and the young king from Paris,—in which city he could have detained her at his pleasure—and to take the field against Condé, who was now in rebellion, supported by a few fresh levies. This was the greatest oversight that De Retz had ever yet committed, and scarcely was it done, when he felt the folly thereof; but, nevertheless, his eyes were not completely opened, and he still hoped to maintain his influence with the queen, by continuing to render her services, and at the same time occasionally playing upon her fears.

Before this period, however, the career of the co-

adjutor had very nearly terminated in an unexpected manner. Knowing him for one of their most determined enemies, the partisans of the prince de Condé formed a scheme for carrying him off from the midst of Paris. The active, intrepid, and enterprising Gourville crossed the country and ventured in disguise into the capital. Hiring a number of determined men, he obtained correct information of all the proceedings of the coadjutor, whose intrigues often led him forth at night almost unaccompanied; and placing his confederates at particular points, where it was likely that De Retz would pass, he waited on more than one night; but an extraordinary coincidence on both these occasions saved the prelate from his hands. A third attempt would undoubtedly have been made had not the number of persons to whom the secret was confided, at length caused it to be betrayed. Gourville effected his escape but narrowly; and several of the persons he employed fell into the hands of De Retz, who with wise and generous policy suffered them to go unpunished.

The desultory warfare which now took place between Turenne, Harcourt, and Hocquinville, on the part of the court, and Condé, Rochefoucault, Beaufort, and Nemours, on the adverse side, we shall of course notice but slightly here. It is sufficient to say that Condé, to whom brilliant successes were absolutely necessary, embarrassed by raw levies and divided friends, effected nothing at all equal to the reputation he had before acquired; and that the queen, freed by her absence from the control of the Fronde and the duke of Orleans, finding herself sufficiently strong in the field to oppose successfully the greatest captain of the day, and believing that the French people were beginning to grow weary of turbulence, recalled Mazarin to her councils; and thus opened the eyes of De Retz both to the folly he had committed in suffering her to quit Paris, and to the absurd character he had played during the latter part of her stay in the capital. Mor-

tified and surprised, he attempted to raise up a third party in the state, and with the parliament and the duke of Orleans keep the other two in check, his principal object being to drive forth Mazarin; and his inclinations leading him, therefore, rather to favour the party of Condé than that of the court. At the same time, however, in fear of losing the cardinal's hat, which had not yet been granted by the pope to the queen's solicitation, he still affected the utmost enmity to the prince.

But Anne of Austria was not to be deceived; and perceiving that whatever might be his words, all his actions were inimical to her views, she sent orders to the French ambassador at Rome to oppose his elevation to the conclave. This very opposition, however, was more favourable to him than even her nomination. The pope and the cardinals conceived that it proceeded from Mazarin himself, whom they hated and despised; and in a secret consistory De Retz was elevated to the purple, without the knowledge of the French ambassador. Something still remained to be done; for it was usual before any prelate was looked upon as one of the cardinals of France that he should receive the hat from the hands of the king. The court, although it had opposed the elevation of De Retz, endeavoured to assume the merit thereof; and Mazarin wrote with his own hand to congratulate the coadjutor upon his elevation. But, nevertheless, the absence of the court gave a very good excuse for holding back the gift of the hat, and thus keeping some check upon the intriguing prelate.

A series of petty negotiations and rapid but minute changes in the relations of all parties took place in Paris about this time, which it would be in vain to attempt to follow. At first De Retz endeavoured to act against the two other parties, by the parliament and the duke of Orleans; but never were two more feeble instruments found for the purposes of an ambitious man. The parliament, em-

barrassed by various opposing decrees which appeared upon its own registers, assailed Mazarin, and thundered against Condé in words; but in actions nothing was done but what was pitiful and contemptible. The duke of Orleans, always weak and vacillating, now obtained not even the appearance of firmness from De Retz, who was himself in a false position, and wavered almost as much as the duke. Tired, however, at length of the proceedings of the parliament, De Retz had recourse to the assemblies of the Hôtel de Ville, which were now assuming a more regular and orderly form. But in the mean time Chavigni, devoted to the interests of the prince, returned to Paris, from which he had been exiled, and speedily raised up in the capital a considerable party in favour of Condé. Ere long, Condé himself announced his intention of appearing in Paris; but immediately the parliament and De Retz opposed themselves to his admission, and besought the duke of Orleans, as lieutenant-general of the kingdom, to prevent the prince's entrance into the capital. The duke of Orleans could not be persuaded to take so strong a measure, however; and Condé arrived in Paris, took his seat in the parliament, notwithstanding all the charges of high treason existing against him, and remained for a considerable length of time in the capital, while his army encamped in the neighbourhood. The army of the court followed; and a battle took place in the suburbs of the city, where Condé, with a very inferior force, supported the attack of Turenne, under the very guns of the Bastille.

The cardinal de Retz is supposed by many of the French historians to have concerted with the duke of Orleans the part which the latter was to play during the strife that went on almost under their eyes; and it is not improbable that the prelate greatly influenced the assembly at the Hôtel de Ville, and decided its members to refuse all admittance to the troops of Condé in their perilous situation. He denies, however, having influenced the duke, and declares

that he at this period, being excluded by his new dignity from the parliament, hardly gave any attention to the intrigues in which he had been formerly so active. Certain it is, however, that the assembly at the Hôtel de Ville, and likewise the duke of Orleans, refused to open the gates to Condé during the whole morning, while in the repeated attacks of Turenne a number of the most gallant gentlemen in France were slaughtered under the walls; and equally certain that messenger after messenger was seen passing between the palaces of the duke of Orleans and the coadjutor. At length, however, the eloquence of the duke's daughter, the cries and shouts of the people, moved with compassion at the sight of the dead and wounded brought in from the prince's army, and the appeal of several of his friends, who represented that he and all attached to him would die rather than surrender, overcame the weak duke of Orleans. The order for admitting the army of Condé was granted; and the prince was saved from a fate which all his own skill and courage could not have averted.

The first determination of Condé, after entering Paris, was to put down the enemies who had so constantly opposed him; and the chief of these was De Retz. His plan appears to have been, to proceed to the archiepiscopal palace, and placing the cardinal in his carriage, to carry him out of the gates of the city, forbidding him ever to enter them again. A dreadful and extraordinary massacre, however, which took place at the Hôtel de Ville, and which rumour attributed to the instigations of the prince himself, spread a degree of consternation through the capital, which even affected Condé. His plans against the coadjutor were not carried into execution, while it would have been easy to pursue them; and De Retz having obtained some intimation of danger, instead of quitting Paris and joining the court, which would have altered the whole after-course of his life, and secured the favour of the court, once more turned Nôtre Dame into an arsenal, and prepared to defend the

cathedral as a fortress in case of attack. A complete state of anarchy succeeded to the massacre at the Hôtel de Ville. Condé certainly remained master of the city by means of his troops: but he had lost the respect of all the better classes of the people; and over his own officers he was gradually losing that authority by which alone discipline could be maintained, and his possession of the capital rendered beneficial. In this crisis of affairs, two steps were taken by the court which rendered the condition of Condé desperate. The parliament was commanded to quit Paris, and proceed to Pontoise; and though only a part obeyed these orders, that part comprised all the most talented and influential counsellors. By the advice of this part, which was recognised as the parliament by the court, Mazarin once more retired into voluntary exile; and the most enthusiastic joy spread itself through Paris, not proceeding in the slightest degree, perhaps, from gratified enmity towards the minister, but because all parties, except that attached to the prince de Condé, were delighted with any opportunity of disentangling themselves honourably from the factions to which they were pledged; freeing themselves from intrigues of which they saw no end, and putting an end to tumults which had already desolated the capital, and disorganised the state of society in France. Every one, whatever had been the cause of his opposition to the court, made the retreat of Mazarin an excuse for seeking to negotiate a reconciliation. The parliament decreed a vote of thanks to the king; the people anticipated nothing but the return of peace, and the appearance of the royal family in the capital; and even Condé and his party, while they called the Spaniards eagerly to their aid, and took up a position in the neighbourhood of Paris, which enabled them, in a great degree, to command that city, affected to be rejoiced at the turn which affairs had taken, and to seek nothing but peace upon terms of security to themselves.

In the mean time De Retz had instantly shaped

his course. He saw that the exile of Mazarin afforded him one of the last opportunities that he might ever obtain for gaining an advantageous position with the court; and he determined, if possible, to have the honour of bringing back the king to Paris. Condé he had always opposed; the duke of Orleans had sacrificed so many partisans, that he might himself be sacrificed without any great scruple of conscience; the parliament was ready to follow any one who would lead them to Compiegne, where the young king and his family then were; and De Retz, persuading the feeble duke of Orleans to authorise any sacrifice which he, the coadjutor, thought proper to make in his name, gathered together a splendid deputation from the clergy of the capital, and proceeded to the dwelling of the king, to entreat his majesty to return to the metropolis. The only reward which he obtained for this service was that of the cardinal's hat, which was given him by the hand of the monarch. But when the coadjutor began to treat with the ministers, he found that they did not estimate his services at the high price which he himself had put upon them.

Although the event justified the coolness of their demeanour to De Retz, and they succeeded in bringing back the king to the capital without granting the terms that he demanded, it is nevertheless certain, that the coadjutor, by the part that he took, had rendered a very important service to the crown. Condé and his friends were in daily expectation of the arrival of two armies,—the one from Spanish Flanders, the other commanded by Charles duke of Lorraine. The wavering duke of Orleans would have been persuaded by a word from the mouth of De Retz to join the party of the princes; the coadjutor himself might have brought them a considerable addition of strength; and the balance between Condé and Turenne, which had only been slightly taught to lean in favour of the latter by the numerical superiority of the royal troops, being changed to the other side by the arrival of vast reinforcements under Fuensaldañes and Charles of Lorraine, might have been determined

for ever in favour of the rebellious prince. The fickle populace of Paris would soon have forgotten its gratitude for the exile of Mazarin; and one victory on the part of Condé would have given him a footing in France which would have required years of civil slaughter to shake. De Retz, however, went over to the court and took with him the submission of the duke of Orleans, and the gratulation of the clergy and people of Paris: Mazarin, by a stratagem, even in exile deceived Fuensaldañes, and diverted his forces from France; Turenne held the forces of Condé and the duke of Lorraine in check; and the prince, unsafe in the capital, baffled in the field, and outwitted by an absent minister whom he despised, took the desperate measure of quitting France and casting himself into the hands of the enemies of his country.

There was nothing now to oppose the court in Paris; and shortly after, without either amnesty or conditions of any kind, though not without fear, Anne of Austria and her son, after a long absence from the mutinous metropolis, returned to Paris, and were received with the most enthusiastic cries of joy. She herself was not insensible of the great service that De Retz had performed; and, on alighting from her carriage at the Louvre, she bade the young king embrace him as the man who had restored him to the capital. His conduct from this moment is inexplicable; for we can neither reconcile it with the idea that he believed the queen was really grateful, and that he still held her in his power, nor with the supposition that he imagined her expressions of kindness to be hypocritical, and suspected that speedy vengeance would be taken upon himself. From the Louvre he proceeded to the Luxembourg, and, according to the account of one of his own attendants, endeavoured to persuade the duke of Orleans immediately to barricade the streets and take possession of the person of the king. Even from his own statement it would appear that he did not endeavour to dissuade the duke from such an attempt, when it was proposed by

another, but on the contrary, offered all his influence to raise the people if it should be resolved upon. All this seemed to imply, that he looked upon the gratitude of the queen as feigned, and regarded his power as at an end if he did not put forth some great effort to re-establish it. On the other hand, however, he made such extraordinary demands upon the court, and adhered to them with such a degree of pertinacity, that he must either have believed the queen to be deeply sensible of his merits and services, or so terrified at his influence, as to be afraid of refusing him whatever he required. Anne of Austria grew weary of his exactions; and he himself soon perceived that anger was succeeding to gratification at the king's restoration to the capital. He kept his house armed; he never went forth unaccompanied by 200 or 300 gentlemen; and, at length, perceiving that he had carried his demands too far, he opened a communication with the absent Mazarin, which at first seemed likely to terminate favourably to the wishes of the coadjutor. Deceived by this appearance of success, De Retz became less cautious. Persuaded by madame de Lesdiguières that there was no danger, he proceeded to the Louvre with very few attendants on the 19th of December, 1652; and after having waited some time in the apartments of madame de Villeroy, he was called to the antechamber of the queen. In the mean time one of his friends in the palace had heard a rumour of his intended arrest, and hastened to inform him of the fact; but De Retz had just passed the other way, and, the moment after, he was arrested by Villequier, captain of the queen's guard. He was immediately taken to another apartment, where, while the carriage was preparing to convey him to prison, dinner was set before him, of which he ate as heartily as if nothing had occurred. At three o'clock he was conveyed to Vincennes; and a very large escort was appointed to conduct him, under the apprehension that the people would attempt a rescue. Not a soul made the slightest movement, however; and

De Retz, arriving at night at the place of his imprisonment, went to bed and slept with the same sort of apathy towards his own fate wherewith the Parisians seemed to regard that of their favourite leader.

The clergy of Paris did, indeed, during the two or three following days, make some efforts to obtain his liberation, and the chapter of the cathedral enjoined solemn prayers for that event: but his own uncle commanded these supplications to be stopped; and De Retz was soon forgotten in the general tendency of all things to tranquillity, except by some of his own personal friends, who continued to labour for his benefit. In the mean time he passed his days at Vincennes laying plans for making his escape, which, however, were always frustrated. Prisoners have generally the privilege of complaining of their treatment; and De Retz accuses his gaolers of every sort of petty annoyance: but the irritation of his own feelings most likely added greatly to any just cause of complaint. On the return of Mazarin, which occurred shortly after his arrest, the imprisonment of the adverse cardinal seems to have been mitigated, and the renewed entreaties of the Parisian clergy, the menaces of the pope, whose authority had received a severe insult in the imprisonment of a cardinal, joined to the efforts of some of De Retz's friends, induced the court to transfer him to Nantes, upon his giving in the formal resignation of his archbishopric. This he knew, having been extorted from him in prison, would never be held valid by the law of France; but the pope opposed it in the first instance, and would not acknowledge it as a lawful act.

In the mean while the maréchal de Meilleraye, to whose custody De Retz was confided, endeavoured to draw from him a promise not to attempt an escape; but the cardinal, whose principal hope in seeking to be removed from Vincennes was to find some means of evasion, skilfully avoided giving any pledge. His new state of imprisonment was much milder than that of Vincennes; and the old general seems to have

treated his prisoner with every sort of indulgence, while at the same time he caused him to be watched with a degree of vigilant care, which for a time set all the cardinal's schemes for escape at defiance. At length, however, rumours of more severe measures being in agitation at the court led him to exert all his skill and courage; and, after various schemes proposed and abandoned, he determined to endeavour to deceive his guards and drop down from the bastion of the castle, to a narrow spot of sand, which was left under the walls on the side of the river when the waters were low. The number of people who were admitted to him daily, and the attendants who were suffered to accompany him in his walks — which he was permitted to extend at pleasure within the limits of the fortress — enabled him to make all the preparations for this purpose with ease. Much more difficulty, however, took place in deceiving the guards who always followed him in his walks, and were commanded never to lose sight of him, even for a moment.

At length, however, it was determined to make the attempt; and towards five o'clock in the evening of the 8th of August 1654, De Retz, accompanied by four friends, and followed by the usual number of guards, proceeded through the garden of the governor, towards a small ravelin which ran out above the river. Horses had been posted in readiness at a little distance, and a number of persons were on the watch to give him assistance. Pretending to be thirsty, he sent back one of his attendants for some wine, and drank a small quantity. Two of his followers then gave the bottle to the guards, and dropped behind upon the pretence of finishing it with them. In the mean time De Retz and the two others passed through a small grated door which led to the ravelin; and, as soon as he was out of sight of the guards, he stripped off his red garments and placed them upon the edge of the parapet, in a spot where he had been accustomed, ever since his arrival at Nantes, to lean over by the hour together gazing at the people walking in the open space below. The guards, keeping the letter of their instructions, had been in the habit of watching

him through the grated door, without entering the ravelin; and now, perceiving his red dress at the usual part of the wall, they took it for granted that he was amusing himself according to his ordinary custom.

In the mean while the cardinal, having proceeded to a more remote part of the ravelin, though he had shown some hesitation and fear ere he quitted his chamber, now resolutely pursued his scheme, and suspended by a horse girth attached to a long rope was let down a distance of forty feet. His agitation, however, was excessive, and, by the account of Joly, he had quite lost all command of himself. The horses were brought up in a moment by his friends, and he was aided to mount; but shortly after an accident occurred, which had nearly thrown him back into the hands of his enemies, and which prevented the execution of one of the most important objects which he had in view. This accident is represented in the most opposite manners by Joly and De Retz himself. The one asserts that the cardinal was so agitated as to be unable to sit his horse. De Retz represents himself as perfectly cool, and declares that the horse took fright at the sun flashing on the barrel of a pistol, which he drew from the saddle-bow, in order to force his way through a party of soldiers belonging to the garrison. Certain it is, however, that he was thrown from his horse and dislocated his shoulder; but his friends gathering round him, and the people joining to facilitate his escape, he was remounted immediately and pursued his journey, though in terrible pain.

The maréchal de Meilleraye did not become aware of his escape for some time after it had taken place, and a variety of extraordinary circumstances combined to favour his evasion: he was concealed for several hours in a secret dungeon of one of the fortified houses then common in France. He was then hidden in a haystack; while a party of the soldiers from Nantes paused in the court-yard, and asked questions concerning the route he had taken. At length, however, he reached the house of the duke of Brissac, who had gathered together 300 gentlemen for

his escort; and by these he was accompanied to the feudal possessions of his brother the duke de Retz. He thence made his escape in a fishing boat to St. Sebastian, where he arrived literally penniless and in rags. At first he was taken for an impostor by the Spanish authorities, but he soon proved to them his identity; and from that moment the kindness and liberality of the king of Spain and his ministers knew no bounds towards a man who had acquired so much renown in factions which had tended greatly to promote the Spanish interests. At first Don Louis de Haro would fain have persuaded him to re-enter France, and throwing himself into Mezieres, the governor of which was devoted to him, to open a communication with the prince de Condé, and once more endeavour to establish the party of the Fronde. One of the great objects which De Retz had proposed to himself in making his escape from Nantes had been to throw himself suddenly into the midst of Paris before any one was aware of his being at liberty, to take possession of the archbishopric, which had fallen to him absolutely by the death of his uncle, and, affecting to devote himself entirely to his ecclesiastical duties, to obtain the support of the whole clergy of France, while he pursued, in a new and more favourable position, his demands and exactions against the French court. The dislocation of his shoulder, however, had impeded his journey, and prevented his effecting this purpose; and he now felt that it was too late to make any open attempt in France against the government. He therefore declined all the proposals of the Spaniards, and returned a present of 40,000 crowns which were sent to him at St. Sebastian..

The Spanish monarch, however, did not abate the least particle of his kindness, but caused him to be escorted, with care and distinction, across the peninsula, and provided him with a galley, which conveyed him in safety to Piombino. From Piombino he proceeded to Florence incognito, but was treated with much kindness by the grand duke of Tuscany. He thence went on to Rome, where he was immediately admitted to a secret

audience of the pope, who showed him every sort of kindness, and presented him publicly with the cardinal's hat, promising him his protection and support. Innocent X., however, was now arrived at a point of extreme old age and of great bodily debility. All the cardinals were looking forward to a new election; and Chigi the secretary of state, who entertained no slight hopes of the elevation he afterwards obtained, did not choose to offend the French party in the conclave by showing much open kindness to the obnoxious De Retz. He held out to him, however, great promises, and pretended, even while he was injuring him, to seek to do him service. At length the death of Innocent opened the way to a new election: De Retz took part in the conclave, and contributed a good deal to the elevation of Chigi to the chair of St. Peter. At first the new pope made every demonstration of gratitude; but De Retz very soon found that he confined himself within the bounds of words, and it was not long before those words became less favourable.

After enduring many mortifications at the Roman court, and having for a time retired to the states of Tuscany, De Retz on his return to Rome found that the new pope had been entirely gained by the French ambassadors, and that while he advised him in a friendly tone to seek a reconciliation with his own monarch by any means, he had appointed an apostolic vicar to take possession of the see of Paris, in the absence of its bishop. In vain De Retz opposed the execution of this unjust design; and his only resource was to send off a messenger to Paris, in order to give notice to the clergy of what was about to take place, and to stir them up to resistance in an instance where the interests of every French bishop were implicated. The success of this measure was such as he desired; the courier arrived before the pope's bull, which the clergy refused to receive unanimously; and the nuncio dared not even publish it in Paris for fear of being stoned by the people. Other measures were then taken; and De Retz

was induced to nominate as his own grand vicar a person suggested to him by the court: but finding that this produced no result,—that the pope was entirely detached from his interests, and that the plague was beginning to make terrible ravages in Italy,—De Retz determined to return to France, in order, if possible, to gain possession of the revenues of his benefices, and he reached Franche Comté in safety. All he could obtain, however, from an assembly of the clergy, was the sum of 8000 crowns per annum for his subsistence; and while the negotiation was proceeding, he entered France, but was obliged to conceal himself in different towns, passing from inn to inn, and, if we are to believe Joly, addicting himself to low debauchery.

Having been vigorously pursued by Mazarin, he was obliged once more to quit his native country, and wandered about for some time in Switzerland and Germany. His friends maintain, that while at Cologne a scheme was formed by Mazarin for carrying him off or assassinating him, but the truth would be very difficult to discover; and De Retz soon after quitted Germany and proceeded to Holland, where he led a vagabond and debauched life, while his servants forgot the respect which they had formerly paid him, and confusion and disunion followed his domestic footsteps, as they had formerly been the companions of all his public actions.

For several years this conduct continued, till the death of Mazarin gave him new hopes of returning to France and re-assuming the archiepiscopal dignity. The chancellor le Tellier, indeed, and the superintendent Fouquet, both applied to the exile, and proposed to negotiate his reconciliation with the court, but the basis upon which both treated was alone that he should resign the archbishopric; and in compensation the king offered to grant him the rich abbey of St. Denis, with some other benefits. After much difficulty this treaty was concluded, and the cardinal proceeding to Commercy, of which place he was prince, signed his resignation in the form appointed by the king.

He afterwards appeared at the court at Fontaine-

bleau, but his influence was passed, his person disagreeable, his memory odious; and, after spending some months at St. Denis, he retired again to Commercy. He there passed many years in a sort of languid idleness which gave occasion to his dismissed attendant Joly to accuse him once more of every sort of libertine excess. But the falsehoods which Joly is proved to have related in regard to this part of the life cast a strong suspicion upon the whole of the rest of his charges. He declares, that in order to deceive the world, and make men believe that he was engaged in some useful and dignified occupation, the cardinal De Retz pretended to employ himself in composing an account of his life, but that he never wrote more than two or three pages thereof, and was totally incapable, from failure of mind and energy, to produce any thing worthy of his reputation. The Memoirs, however, remain, voluminous enough to have filled up the leisure of several years, and breathing in every page that splendid but irregular genius which made him remarkable through life. Joly also represents him as given up entirely to his pleasures, ungrateful to his friends, and thoughtless of his creditors; but it is an undoubted fact, that, by care and the most rigid economy, he paid off the large debt of 3,000,000 of livres, which he had contracted during his exile, and while, deprived of all his revenues, he depended for support upon the kindness of his friends. It is probable, indeed, that the insolence of Joly passed the bounds of decency, and that De Retz by dismissing him, changed an impudent dependant into an ungrateful calumniator. At all events, if we compare the terms in which De Retz speaks * of the servants who followed him in misfortune with the language in which Joly alludes to his former friend in the end of his Memoirs, the advantage will be found greatly in favour of the cardinal. Shortly before his death De Retz removed to St. Denis, and at length terminated his troubled career in Paris, in the year 1679.

Gifted with high talents, placed in a commanding

* Vol. iv. p. 87.

position, educated with care, quick, learned, courageous, firm, active, indefatigable, and energetic, with much penetration into both men and things, and the presence of mind necessary to seize every opportunity, De Retz seemed born to rule and benefit some large portion of his fellow-creatures. But, with strong passions and inordinate vanity, he was forced into a profession for which he was unfit, which forbade the gratification of the one, enjoined the mortification of the other, and curbed even the efforts of that genius, which in another walk might have led him forward to the summit of power and glory. But the false position in which he was placed through life, by the opposition of his character and his profession, was not the only cause of his misconduct or his downfall. His vanity was of that active and enterprising nature which could alone be gratified by surprising and dazzling: his natural quickness and penetration found exercise and enjoyment in intrigue of every kind; and while, in the course of passion, the alternate excitement of pursuit, and the lassitude of satiety, displayed all the irregularity of activity and indolence, he still returned to the political arena with fresh powers and fresh virulence, till a long and enforced cessation brought over the fiery strength of ambition the weariness of premature age, and the listlessness of corporeal decay. Never in the world's history was there, perhaps, a more striking instance of immense powers misused, great advantages thrown away, and many bright qualities darkened by a cloud of faults, than in the cardinal de Retz, — never a more striking example, amongst the lamentable many, of the misery of genius without virtue. In person, De Retz was remarkably plain, tall, but ill shaped, and with features harsh but expressive. His eyes and teeth were very fine, however, and he had unfortunately too great cause to feel vain of his personal as well as of his mental attractions. Born in one of the most corrupt periods of modern history, and thrown accidentally into scenes of anarchy and confusion, something must be allowed on account of the times, the nation, and the

circumstances, as a palliation for many of his faults. Too many will rest upon him still, and mark him out for ever as a warning rather than an example.

It has been customary to add to the lives of celebrated men any remarkable sayings which they are reported to have uttered in the course of their lives. These sayings, when bearing a reference to their own characters or actions, are generally worthless, inasmuch as they are, nine times out of ten, framed for the purpose of defending some particular line of conduct, or of dazzling and surprising by a ready answer, which has in reality often been prepared long before. Maxims, also, recorded by others, unless borne out by the immediate testimony of credible witnesses, can rarely be depended upon as the genuine reflections of a great man. But when, on the other hand, he has recorded with his own hand, and in brief and striking language, the conclusions which long experience or powerful genius have enabled him to draw regarding the general principles of human action, his maxims become most valuable to the philosopher, the politician, and the moralist. Of such sententious reflections, no one has left so many, perhaps, as the cardinal de Retz; and, as they are undoubtedly the fruit of his long experience in political cabal, some may be added here, as a specimen of the style of thought in which they are conceived, though it would be impossible to give the whole that are scattered through his memoirs.

"Conspiracies," he says, "are often foolish, but there is nothing like them for making prudent people in the end, at least for some time. As the danger in this sort of affair lasts even after the affair itself, one is obliged to be cautious and circumspect in the times that follow."

"I am persuaded that greater qualities are requisite to form a good party leader, than to form a good emperor of the universe; and that amongst the qualities which compose that character, resolution walks side by side with judgment. I speak of that heroic judgment the principal use of which is to distinguish what is extraordinary from what is impossible."

"The great secret for those who are entering upon

great employments is, in the first instance, to seize upon men's imagination by some action, or some circumstance, which renders them remarkable."

"To condescend to the least, is the surest means of equalling one's self to the greatest."

"That which draws down a certain odium upon almost all the actions of ministers, even the most necessary, is, that in order to accomplish them, they are obliged to surmount obstacles, their triumph over which never fails to brings with it hatred and envy. When a considerable opportunity occurs, in which there is nothing to be overcome, because there is nothing to combat —which, however, is very rare,—it gives to the exercise of their authority, a pure, innocent, and unmixed lustre, which does not only serve to strengthen it, but enables them to draw, in the end, almost as much credit from that which they do not do, as from that which they do."

"One is more frequently the dupe of suspicion than of confidence."

"The Roman empire set up to auction, and the Ottoman empire exposed every day to the bowstring, trace for us, in bloody characters, the blindness of those who would prove that authority consists in nothing but force."

"It sits worse upon a minister to speak follies, than to commit them."

"It is as dangerous, and often as criminal, in the eyes of princes, to have the power of doing good, as to have the wish of doing evil."

"The blindest temerity, and the most outrageous fear, produce the same effects when the danger is unknown."

"It is the nature of fear to deliberate, rather than to decide."

"In popular bodies, the blindness of the well-intentioned (in regard to revolutionary measures) is, in general, followed closely by the clear-sightedness of those who mix the spirit of faction with the public interests, and who see the future and the possible, while the rest* think of nothing but the present and the apparent."

* I have been obliged to translate this maxim freely, in order to render it intelligible. De Retz was speaking of the parliament of Paris, and

"One should never trifle with those who hold in their hands the royal authority. Whatever defects they may have, they are never insignificant enough not to require, that we should either conciliate them, or ruin them entirely. Their enemies ought never to contemn them, because they are the only people in the world who never ought to be contemned."

"Licence is one of the most irremediable evils which are attached to faction; and it is very great, inasmuch as that sort of licence which does not suit the faction is almost always fatal to it, because it decries it in public estimation."

"Nothing persuades people of little sense so much as that which they do not understand."

"Party leaders are no longer masters of their party, than while they can foresee murmurs, or appease them."

"It is as necessary to guard one's words in great affairs, as it is superfluous to choose them in trifles."

We must add one more example, though the doctrine inculcated is both so false and dangerous, that the first clause of the maxim was retorted upon De Retz himself when he opposed one of the more violent proceedings which the Fronde was about to adopt. "Morality in public affairs has much greater latitude than in private; but it is always judicious not to make use of that latitude without extreme precaution, because there is nothing but success which justifies it: and who can be answerable for success?" Few, indeed, of the maxims of De Retz will be found, on close examination, to be unexceptionable in point of morality; but they all show great, though irregular genius, and mingle, as he did in his life, the wisdom of the statesman with the subtlety of the party leader.

mingled up with his general reflection terms solely applicable to that body; yet the maxim was so important that I did not choose to omit it. I think it right, however, to subjoin the original, lest I be accused of wilful mistranslation:—"L'aveuglement des bien intentionnés en cette matière est suivi, pour l'ordinaire, bientôt après, de la pénétration de ceux qui mèlent la passion de la faction dans les intérêts publics, et qui voient le futur et le possible, dans le temps que les compagnies réglées ne songent qu'au présent et à l'apparent."

JEAN BAPTISTE COLBERT, MARQUIS DE SEIGNELAI.

BORN 1619, DIED 1683.

The difficulties which in all countries beset the path of men who with great talents but little interest endeavour to force their way up the steep and laborious ascent of ambition were under the ancient government of France more numerous than in any other land. Distinctive privileges, a rigid system of etiquette, and a government of favoritism, closed against genius all access to power, unless the aspirant was marshalled on his way by high rank, or led by a long train of eminent ancestors; and the venality of every department of the state, under Louis XIII. and Louis XIV., rendered wealth also necessary in general to open the way to authority. That Colbert should rise from obscurity to eminence at such a period, and from an inferior station, should climb to the height of power, solely supported by his own abilities, is enough to show that those abilities were of a very extraordinary kind; but at the same time it does high honour to the minister who first discovered them. To show what were the obstacles which he had to overcome, what the difficulties which obstructed his way, it is necessary to inquire into the early events of a period in that great minister's career which was not otherwise distinguished.

After Colbert by the vigour of his genius had raised himself to the highest pitch of authority, and had, by the exercise of the power he had obtained, created for himself an eminent station in the history of his country, a number of those men who are incapable of separating the idea of intrinsic dignity from worldly station, laboured hard to prove that the minister was

descended from a long line of illustrious personages, and endeavoured to diminish the greatness of his rise by elevating his original station in life. It is very clear, however, that the family from which Colbert sprung was at the period of his birth in very indifferent circumstances. That it was noble is certain from the fact of several members thereof being found filling offices which could alone be occupied by persons in the class then denominated in France by the term *gentilhomme*. It must be remembered, however, that the aristocracy of France itself was subdivided into classes, and that the utmost to which an individual of the smaller noblesse could pretend with any prospect of success, was the attainment of some inferior office, either in the law, the church, or the army. The higher stations in the court and the camp we find almost uniformly filled by persons belonging to the higher families, whose wealth and influence commanded that consideration with the monarch or the minister which the lower grades, the nobility of the robe, or the provinces, could not attain ; and all that any member of the family of Colbert could reasonably hope for, as the utmost object of ambition, was some post of dignity in the parliaments, either of the capital or the provinces.

Jean Baptiste Colbert was the son of Nicholas Colbert, whom we find qualified as lord of Vandiere, but, in fact, a small proprietor in Champagne, living, we have reason to believe, principally by the sale of wine produced on his estate ; and adding thereunto, we are told, at an after period, a lucrative trade in silk and oil, probably the produce of some other estate, as general commerce was prohibited to persons of his class. The future minister was born at Rheims in 1619*, and was at first, it seems, destined for the humble occupation of a notary. Of his early education we have very few details, but there is every reason to believe that in regard to many branches of knowledge it was considerably neglected ; while on

* Some say at Paris.

those points in regard to which his genius afterwards developed itself so greatly, he possessed advantages which were not common to persons in his station of life. It seems admitted by all, that opportunities were afforded him, though for what purposes we do not know, of travelling through almost every part of France; and he thus stored his mind with a species of knowledge which proved of the utmost utility to him in his after career. He seems at a very early age to have devoted himself to study the resources and productions of his native country; and we are told that he showed a strong disposition for those arts and sciences, which, when in power, it was his glory to support and encourage. Of this early taste, however, we have no very distinct instances recorded; and we may naturally suspect that panegyrists have supposed the early talents they commemorate, when they do not produce any proofs of their having existed.

While Colbert was thus advancing toward manhood, and acquiring both by travel and study that information which he afterwards employed so well, other circumstances, over which he himself had no control, were combining to lead him into a different path from that in which fortune had originally conducted his footsteps. A near relation of his father, Jean Baptiste, seigneur de Pouange, one who there is reason to believe had acted as godfather to the future statesman, had some time before married the sister of the well known Michael le Tellier, who in the latter part of the reign of Louis XIII. occupied several posts in the administration, and who under the government of Mazarin became, from the favour in which he stood with the cardinal, a personage of greater importance than he had appeared while the more powerful mind of Richelieu exercised all the ministerial functions of the state. Whether Pouange had sufficient discrimination to discern, in the opening mind of Colbert, the germ of those splendid talents which were destined to raise him far above his early patrons, or whether kindred

affection alone induced him to exert his interest in favour of his young relation, we cannot now discover. He, however, was the first who introduced Colbert into the political paths which he never afterwards ceased to follow, and presenting him to Le Tellier, obtained for him some small post in the office of the secretary of state. Le Tellier, well satisfied with his diligence, activity, and zeal, employed him in various transactions of some importance; and, in the troublous times that succeeded during the wars of the Fronde, the double banishment of Mazarin, the expulsion of the court from Paris, and the constant intrigues by which the contending factions impeded the government, interrupted the commerce, and ruined the finances of the state, Colbert remained attached to the minister who had been his first patron, and found various opportunities both of displaying his talents and proving his fidelity.

An anecdote is told regarding his first introduction to Mazarin which must not be passed over in silence, although it only rests upon that general report which forms the usual but suspicious foundation of most of the minor particulars which we receive concerning the early lives of great men. It is well known that during the exile of Mazarin both Anne of Austria and Le Tellier kept up an uninterrupted correspondence with the absent minister, and ruled the state, and struggled with the factions which convulsed it, under the dictation of the cardinal. There were periods, however, when the attachment of the queen to her absent minister seemed shaken, and would probably have given way entirely, had it not been for the fidelity of Le Tellier, who took care to warn Mazarin of all that passed to his disadvantage. It is thus probable that many of the letters of Anne of Austria, which were never intended for the eye of the minister, were communicated to him during his absence from France; and on one of these occasions Colbert is said to have been despatched by Le Tellier to Sedan, bearing a letter written by the queen, which he was ordered to show to the minister, but on no account to leave in

his possession. Mazarin, however, sought to retain the letter, and endeavoured by every means to drive the young messenger from Sedan without it. Colbert persisted, and, notwithstanding both the artifices and the threats of the exiled minister, bore back the letter to Le Tellier. On the cardinal's triumphant return to France, and re-establishment in the office of prime minister, he desired Le Tellier to find for him some person worthy of confidence, to whom he could trust the writing of various important papers, and Colbert was presented to him as one well qualified for the office. Mazarin instantly recollected his face, but forgot the circumstances under which he had before seen him, and questioned the young statesman upon the subject. Colbert, it seems, was now alarmed for the consequences of his former pertinacity: but when Mazarin heard the facts, he speedily relieved the secretary's mind, by bidding him only serve him with the same fidelity which on that occasion he had displayed in the service of another.

Not only did the services of Colbert give entire satisfaction to Mazarin, but his extraordinary genius for affairs of state became very soon apparent to the keen eyes of the minister. From that moment Colbert did not cease to be engaged in the most confidential concerns of the cabinet, and in employments which were, perhaps, more favourable to his advancement than even his public occupations, namely, in the domestic affairs of the minister himself. There is reason to believe that, for a considerable time, he aided Mazarin in regulating his household, in cutting off all unnecessary branches of expenditure, and in enabling the cardinal to maintain an appearance of the greatest splendour at the least possible expense. His talents for finance thus became fully displayed to the eyes of his patron; and when the insolence of Fouquet induced Mazarin to punish him, by embarrassing the execution of his functions as superintendent of finance, and withdrawing from his administration a number of the branches

over which the superintendents had formerly exercised control, he employed the talents of Colbert in the management and application of the sums thus placed at his disposal.

We may suppose that the jealousy which was thus excited between Colbert and Fouquet might have been dangerous to the former, had not the power of Mazarin and the generosity of his rival been his defence; and it would seem that any enmity which existed was, in truth, far more upon the part of Colbert than on that of Fouquet. It is probable, indeed, that the superintendent, holding as he did the second office in the state, and shielded even from the resentment of Mazarin by an office of consideration in the parliament of Paris, looked down upon the rising statesman, whose talents he did not know, and considered him unworthy of alarm, in that indignation which he felt towards the minister himself. Whether any of the exactions on the part of Mazarin, which, by embarrassing the finances, proved ultimately the ruin of Fouquet, were devised by Colbert or proceeded alone from the avarice or malice of the [illegible] minister, we cannot now discover; but if Fouquet held Colbert cheap during his first steps towards power, the proofs of ability which he daily gave, and the increasing distinction with which he was treated by the minister, ought soon to have opened the eyes of the superintendent. He speedily received the high honour of being appointed counsellor of state, an office to obtain which Richelieu himself laboured for many years unsuccessfully; and step by step, and day by day, he rose in station and in importance. Various missions requiring a skilful negotiator, and implying the utmost confidence in the genius and fidelity of the envoy, are said to have been intrusted to the care of the rising statesman. One of the principal of these missions was to the court of Rome, a court in regard to which no one knew better than Mazarin the necessity of the keenest discrimination, the coolest self-possession, and the most persevering firmness, even

on the smallest points. The object, too, of the negotiation—viz. the reconciliation of the cardinal de Retz with the court of France—required equal skill, coolness, and resolution; and, if no mistake be made by the early biographers of the statesman*, the choice of Colbert by Mazarin evinces that, long before others had discovered the abilities of that great minister, the clear-sighted Italian had perceived his latent powers under his cold and somewhat repulsive exterior.

It is probable that the cardinal was not unaware that, in employing Colbert in the intricate details of foreign policy, he did not give his genius that field in which it was best calculated to act; but it is not impossible that Mazarin, who had cause to suspect both Lionne and Le Tellier in regard to some former transaction in which De Retz was concerned, could not place such firm reliance in any of those who surrounded him as he could in Colbert. Another object of his mission to Rome was to engage the pope to perform some promises which had been made by his predecessor in regard to the restitution of the duchy of Castro to the duke of Parma, and he was also employed to obtain from various courts in Italy succours of men and money, for the purpose of co-operating with the French army in defending the Isle of Candia, then menaced by the Turks. In none of these negotiations, however, was Colbert successful in any great degree: the princes of Italy were too poor and too much exhausted by long wars and contentions to afford any important aid in an enterprise of so little interest to themselves; and a quarrel between the courts of France and Rome, regarding a mere point of ceremony, caused Colbert to retire from the pontifical state with some degree of precipitation.

While thus employed in negotiations less suited to his genius, Colbert was of course debarred from

* I have been induced to express a doubt, because I have seen it asserted that this mission was fulfilled by the brother of Colbert, afterwards so celebrated as a negotiator. All the early histories of Colbert, however, assign it to him.

exercising those functions, in which he had previously displayed such great ability. But Mazarin, who had now tried him in two departments, immediately replaced him in the situation from which he had been for a time removed, and employed him to the last day of his life in the direction of those branches of finance which he retained under his own immediate superintendence. What was absolutely the office which Colbert held during the life of Mazarin is very difficult to ascertain. The simple post of councillor of state gave no important functions to perform; and it is evident that the future minister was actively employed for many years before the death of the cardinal. Voltaire declares that he was intendant or steward of Mazarin's household, which is confirmed by La Houssaye; but, in his will, the minister himself speaks of another person named Picon, as exercising that office; and it was not till a few days previous to the decease of the cardinal that Colbert was named by the king intendant of finance — a post subordinate to that of Fouquet, and which had remained for some time unfilled, as useless.

It seems certain, however, that Mazarin, as he felt that his own career was approaching its termination, lost no opportunity of opening the way for Colbert, and that he took means to bring him constantly in communication with the young king. Endeavouring hastily to repair, at the end of life, his negligence in regard to the education of Louis, the cardinal laboured zealously during the latter months of his existence to instruct his royal pupil in the duties of a monarch, and in the science of policy; and it would seem that, in regard to finance, where he must have felt his own deficiency, he employed Colbert to give the necessary information to the king. No service could be more important to both parties than was thus rendered by Mazarin to Louis and Colbert; and in favour of the latter he spoke long and eloquently to the young monarch, ending an eulogium, such as Mazarin seldom pronounced upon any one, by the remarkable words, "Sire, I owe your majesty every thing; but I

believe I can repay you in a great degree by giving you monsieur Colbert." His own confidence in the young statesman he showed to be unbounded, by the whole tenour of his will, which intrusted to Colbert all his private papers, and the entire management of those affairs which he most wished to keep veiled from the general eye. He left him also considerable legacies, and named him one of his executors; but the best gift he bestowed upon him was the confidence of the king, which Colbert never lost by imprudence or insolence; but the first use that he made of which, left the darkest stain upon his own memory.

No sooner were the eyes of Mazarin closed than intrigue and cabal commenced at the court of France, and every one who had the slightest prospect of success strove eagerly to ingratiate themselves with the young monarch, in hopes of obtaining the favour and the post of the dead minister. Colbert alone, either perceiving that a great interval still existed between himself and the height of power, or aware of the advice of Mazarin, and of the intentions of the king, made no effort to obtain that for which so many struggled. He applied himself alone to increase the favour which opened before him the prospect of future greatness, and to remove from his path that enemy who obstructed his progress in the course for which he felt his talents to be peculiarly suited. Although Mazarin had had the dissimulation to name Fouquet one of the executors of his will, yet there is little doubt that, to the last day of his life, he continued to entertain a malignant hatred towards the unfortunate superintendent, and had represented his conduct to the king in a light the most likely to ruin an imprudent minister with a proud and ostentatious monarch. He left behind him also in the councils and confidence of the king two men who entertained towards Fouquet a like hatred, though modified by their own peculiar characters.

The secretary of state, Le Tellier, looked upon Fouquet as a rival more to be feared than any other in the ambi-

tious course which the death of Mazarin had opened to his endeavours. He hated him for his popular talents, his extensive views, his magnificent projects; and he feared him for that ascendency which his generous nature and courteous demeanour had gained over the greater part of the court, and for the favour in which he seemed to stand with the young monarch himself. Colbert, on his part, did not fear Fouquet, but he hated him none the less. In the first place, he regarded him as a man whom he had aided to injure — the broadest and most unshakeable basis for everlasting animosity: in the next place, he looked upon him as an impediment in his way, and as the possessor of that peculiar office which he himself was calculated by nature to fill; but there might be other motives not quite so ungenerous, which joined with personal views to give force and activity to the animosity of Colbert. By nature a financier, Colbert could not behold the dissipation of the royal treasures, the exactions of mercenary collectors, the impositions and corruptions of those who farmed the revenues, and the boundless and the heedless expenditure of the superintendent himself, whose function and duty as a minister was to save as well as to provide, without feeling all the better principles of his nature roused up, both against a system which was daily producing fresh misery to the people and fresh embarrassments to the state, and against a man who neglected his duty, squandered wealth not his own, plunged his sovereign in difficulties, and loaded his country with a burden too heavy to be borne. Such was the man he beheld in Fouquet; and, totally without those popular manners on which his rival valued himself, frugal, if not parsimonious in his own habits, as well as cold and severe by natural character, it is probable that he looked upon the courteous demeanour of the superintendent, his lavish generosity, and his easy good humour, with utter contempt, and on the admiration which they produced in the multitude with anger and dissatisfaction.

Whatever might be the motives of his enmity towards

Fouquet, whatever just cause the vices of the superintendent might afford him for censure and disparagement, the effect produced upon his own mind displayed failings, if we may term them by so mild a name, much more detestable than those which called them forth. Malignity of the darkest kind, duplicity of the meanest sort, and that iniquitous and persevering enmity which, unsatisfied with simple justice, immolates a victim instead of punishing a criminal. Scarcely was Mazarin dead, when the cabals against Fouquet commenced; and Le Tellier and Colbert went hand in hand to work his ruin. The latter, indeed, had very little ostensible influence, but his real power of injuring was rendered the greater by that very circumstance. Every one expected that a prime minister would be immediately appointed to relieve the king from the fatigues of governing his people, — fatigues to which he had never been accustomed, and which seemed alike unsuited to his youth and temperament. All courted, all flattered, all waited impatiently to see where the power-conferring smile would be bestowed. At length one of the inferior functionaries ventured to demand of the king to whom they were in future to address themselves regarding the affairs of state. "To me," replied the monarch; and, according to the advice of Mazarin, he thenceforward applied himself diligently to perform the real duties of a king, without intrusting the mighty power placed by God in his hands to be exercised by others.

Still the eyes of the courtiers were not opened. They conceived that the mind of the young monarch would soon be fatigued by all the dry details and laborious inquiries which must necessarily occupy a sovereign who rules for himself; and they flattered themselves that the course of government would gradually fall into its old channel, and a favourite or a minister be found necessary. The pleasing manners of Fouquet seemed not to have been without their effect upon Louis; and there appears to be little doubt that, though he never intended for a moment to raise him to the situa-

tion of Mazarin, he sincerely desired to retain him in the post which he already occupied, to correct him of his faults, and to direct his genius to better endeavours. The golden opportunity was before Fouquet, had he chosen to have availed himself of it; but for years he had gone on in the same course of profusion, voluptuousness, and imprudence. He had embarked upon a wide and rapid stream, when the sun was shining and the day serene, and now, carried away by the torrent, he could not return to the shore when storms had arisen and threatening clouds obscured the horizon. He determined to pursue his course, and endeavour to ride out the tempest.

Instead of retrenching his expenses, regulating his accounts, exerting his great abilities, relieving the people, and economising the royal finances, he determined to deceive the king by the perplexity of his financial statements, or to weary him by their length and intricacy. But he forgot that there was such a man as Colbert, and knew not that with him every night the king held long consultations in private, in which the fallacies of his statements were proved, the intricacies of his accounts unravelled, their tedious length abridged, and the whole made clear, even to the mind of a prince unaccustomed to business, but by no means deficient in natural penetration. Had he known that such was the case, it is more than probable that he would have felt himself compelled to follow a wiser and more upright line of conduct, feeling that he was placing in the hands of a rival and an enemy the most tremendous arms to be employed against himself. Whether Colbert did or did not use those arms ungenerously,—whether he did not add insinuations and accusations to the truths which the examinations of Fouquet's state papers elicited,—cannot now be told; but it is certain that every morning the council assembled at the palace, and Fouquet made his report; that every evening that report was examined, and its fallacies exposed by Colbert: and so far, it is impossible to blame either the king or his confidant; the one was justified in obtaining every assistance to ascertain the

real state of his dominions and the fidelity of his servants, and the other was bound by his duty to give his monarch every aid in discovering the difficult but necessary truth.

The conduct of the king and Colbert, however, did not continue through the whole affair so just or so honourable. Louis gave the superintendent ample opportunities and sufficient warning: he demanded statements, he required explanations, he pointed out defalcations, and he showed much mildness in listening to excuses, and great forbearance in giving time for amendment. How long this forbearance would have continued, had the judgment of the monarch been left unprejudiced, cannot be told; but it is clear that the adversaries of Fouquet took care to instil into the mind of the king other and less justifiable suspicions than those regarding his fidelity as a minister of finance. Louis was taught to believe that the designs of Fouquet were of a daring and criminal nature; that he held communications of a very doubtful character with foreign nations, and that his influence in France itself, acquired by the immense resources at his command, was far greater than a subject ought to possess, and such as might prove infinitely dangerous to his sovereign. He was said to be fortifying Belle Isle, for the purpose of securing a retreat against the wrath of his king, or of giving it up to the English as a price for their protection. His party was said to be so great that it would be dangerous to arrest him in Paris; and the king very soon determined to punish a minister whom he had long known to be unworthy of his confidence, and whom he now learned to look upon with apprehension as well as indignation.

Colbert, determined to dissimulate himself, easily taught the monarch to dissimulate also, and for a considerable time Fouquet was deceived with great art, both by the monarch and the rival statesman. The objections and reproofs of the king seemed to have ceased; the superintendent was taught to believe

that his favour was increasing; new honours and prospects of fresh advancement were raised up before his eyes; and the office of prime minister was skilfully held out to his ambition, to lull his suspicions and lure him on towards his fate. The motives of these precautions were manifold; but the principal one, or rather that which was made the most ostensible to the king, was in itself weak and absurd. This was, the danger of resistance on the part of Fouquet's friends throughout the country, — a danger that was perfectly unreal and imaginary; but as it had been put forward in order to animate the king against the superintendent, Colbert and those who had used it in that manner were obliged to act in every other respect as if it had been real. The other motives, however, were more solid. Fouquet, besides his post of superintendent of finance, was also one of the *procureurs généraux* of the parliament, and, as long as he possessed that office, the undoubted privileges of the body to which he belonged must have prevented the possibility of his being tried in the summary manner which suited the arbitrary disposition of the king and [illegible] of his political and personal enemies. Besides this, he was supported in power by the favour of the queen-mother; and also, as a great many sums were in arrear, it was found necessary to obtain, by his means, fresh supplies for carrying on the business of the state, and to make use of him for the interests of those who, for their own interests, were soon to destroy him.

The two first of these impediments in the way of his arrest, — viz. his position in the magistracy, and his protection by the queen-mother, — were removed by the arts and intrigues of Colbert. The latter was accomplished without great difficulty; for though Anne of Austria was firm in her friendships, and pertinacious against opposition, yet superstition, superior in her mind to every other principle, might always be successfully employed to overcome her partialities. The young king's reverence for her who had

guided his early years and carried him safely through a long minority, marked by the turbulence and rebellion of his subjects, was far too great to admit of any serious measures being adopted against a man protected by the queen-mother; but two nuns of a convent, which Anne of Austria was in the habit of visiting frequently, were skilfully employed to persuade her that the ruin of the superintendent would be pleasing to God. Unhappily for Fouquet it happened that his life afforded too many subjects of accusation to his enemies, and, in the present instance, too fair a pretext for representing him as marked out for divine vengeance. Anne of Austria was persuaded, that to shield him by her protection against the anger of her son and the malice of his enemies would be an act of resistance to the will of Heaven; and she gave her consent to his dismissal from power, though she reserved the right to plead her influence in mitigation of any punishment which might be assigned to his offences.

To induce him to resign his office in the parliament was a far more difficult matter; but this also was accomplished by the skill and diligence of Colbert and Le Tellier. Louis XIV. could hardly fail under the guidance of Mazarin to acquire the art of deceit, and through life he showed that dissimulation was in his eyes a most kingly virtue; but never throughout the course of his long reign did he display more consummate hypocrisy than towards the unfortunate Fouquet. No sooner had he given up the hope of reforming the superintendent, and determined upon his fall, than his whole manner changed towards him; but instead of displaying the severity which existed in his bosom, he assumed the appearance of feelings directly opposite to those by which he was really influenced, received his falling minister with every demonstration of increasing favour, and cast a veil of smiles over the frowning purposes of his heart. Every thing was arranged in such a manner as to induce Fouquet to believe that his elevation to the

station of prime minister would speedily take place, and at the same time agents were employed skilfully to insinuate, that the only obstacle which existed was the post he held in the parliament. The blue riband of the order of St. Louis was also held out to his ambition; but it was urged that the king, who had just been obliged to bestow that decoration upon the first president of the parliament, could not well bestow a second order upon another member of that body.

In the blind confidence of uninterrupted prosperity Fouquet had never guarded against adversity, and he was the last man on earth to distrust the smiles of fortune. Perceiving that it was the king's wish he should sell his post in the parliament, he took no pains to examine why the king should wish it, but followed the lure that was held out for him, and disposed of his office of *procureur*. With the profuse liberality which characterised all his actions, he carried the sum which the sale produced to that branch of the public revenue called the *épargne*; and he who in the times of trouble had sold his own private property to supply the necessities of the state, now lent the king from his own funds the sum of a million of livres, at the very moment that his fall was determined.

All obstacles were now removed, but yet Louis temporised; and long after he had resolved to pursue the unfortunate superintendent with the utmost rigour, he accepted an invitation from Fouquet to a magnificent fête, given at the minister's beautiful seat called Vaux, where every thing that was splendid, graceful, or luxurious, was collected to entertain the monarch and his court. Nothing which had yet been seen in France equalled the costly brilliancy of the fête at Vaux, and none of the royal dwellings could at all compare with the mansion and the grounds in which it was given. But Fouquet, if he hoped to please his royal master by such an ostentatious entertainment, sadly misunderstood the human heart. Louis saw himself outdone in splendour by a subject,

and therein received an offence which he could never forgive. Every thing that was collected for his pleasure or his amusement was viewed as the effects of an insolent rivalry, in which love was said to have been not without its share; and an accidental circumstance, with which Fouquet himself had nothing to do, increased the king's anger, and gave point to the insinuations of Colbert. Over all the house, and throughout all the decorations, were to be seen skilfully painted the device of Fouquet's family, consisting of a squirrel, with the motto *Quo non ascendam?*—"Whither will I not rise?" Louis, who did not understand Latin, caused the motto to be translated to him, and found, or affected, fresh indignation at its ambitious tendency. The courtiers remarked, however, the singular fact, that the squirrel was represented every where as pursued by a snake, which were the arms of Colbert; and the malicious deductions that were thence drawn were but too well justified by the conduct of the statesman. Louis's anger is said to have been raised so high, that he meditated and even proposed to those around him the indecent act of arresting Fouquet in the midst of the festivities which had given so much offence. He was persuaded to refrain, however, by the queen-mother; and shortly after, on the 29th of August, 1661, took his departure for Nantes, having previously caused several detachments of troops to march secretly into Britanny.

Fouquet followed with the rest of the courtiers, and was treated with increasing favour. He received, nevertheless, various intimations of his danger; but, deceived by the artful demeanour of the king, he took no precautions, and could not be persuaded to fly. On the morning of his arrest he went boldly to the council, though privately informed of what was likely to take place, transacted his business with the monarch as usual, and then retired, followed from the anteroom by a crowd of courtiers, who mistook the setting for the ascending star. Artagnan, commander of the first company of the king's musketeers, had already received orders to

arrest him, but lost sight of him in the crowd, and could not overtake him till he was some distance from the palace. Fouquet it would seem had by this time conceived some suspicion that the intimations of danger which had been given him were but too true; and he was walking on with very hasty footsteps and an absent air, when Artagnan came up with him in the square of the cathedral, and notified to him the order for his arrest. The flatterers who surrounded him fled like clouds before the wind, but Fouquet himself bore his reverse with unshaken firmness: he offered no complaint, he expressed no surprise, but merely turning to one of his servants who was near, he said, "Let the king be obeyed in Belle Isle," as if he at length comprehended the nature of some of the insinuations by which his enemies had poisoned the mind of the monarch. He was immediately conducted to the castle of Angiers; and the facility with which every thing concerning his apprehension was conducted showed how little cause there was for the fears which had been entertained in regard to arresting him in Paris. Several other persons were apprehended with Fouquet; but the best account of the whole affair is given in a letter from the king himself to Anne of Austria; and the picture of duplicity which is therein displayed is not unworthy of preservation.

Letter from Louis XIV. to Anne of Austria.

"Madam, my Mother,

"I have already written to you this morning the execution of the orders which I had given for arresting the superintendent, but I wish now to send you the details of this affair. You know that for some time I have had it at heart, but it was impossible to do it sooner, because I wished first to make him pay 30,000 crowns for the marine, and, moreover, that there were a great many things to be settled, which could not be done in a day, and you cannot imagine the trouble I

have had even in finding the means of speaking to Artagnan in private; for I am overwhelmed all day long by a number of sharp people, who on the slightest sign might have seen deeper than I wished. Nevertheless, two days ago, I ordered him to hold himself ready, and to make use of Du Claveau and Maupertuis in the absence of the *maréchaux des logis* and brigadiers of my musketeers, the greater part of whom are ill. I was very impatient, indeed, that all this should be finished, not having any thing else to keep me in this place. At length, this morning, having come to do business with me according to custom, I kept him amused, sometimes with one thing, sometimes with another, and pretended to be searching for papers until, through the windows of my cabinet, I saw Artagnan in the court of the castle, and I then suffered the superintendent to go, who, after having talked for a few minutes with La Feuillade, disappeared just as he was bowing to Le Tellier, so that poor Artagnan fancied he had missed him, and sent Maupertuis to tell me that he suspected some one had told him to escape. But he overtook him in the square of the cathedral, and arrested him in my name towards mid-day. He demanded the papers that he had upon him, amongst which they tell me I shall find an account of the true state of Belle Isle; but I have so many other things to do that I have not been able to see them yet. Nevertheless, I have commanded monsieur Boucherat to go and seal up every thing at the house of the superintendent, and monsieur Pellot at the house of Pelisson, whom I have caused to be arrested also. I had pretended that I wish to hunt this morning, and under this pretext had caused my carriages to be prepared, and my musketeers to mount. I had also commanded the companies of guards, who are here, to exercise in the meadows, in order to have them quite ready to march upon Belle Isle. No sooner then was the affair done than they put the superintendent into one of my carriages, and conveyed him to the château of Angiers,

followed by the musketeers (who will wait for me there), while his wife, by my order, goes to Limoges.

Fourille marched instantly to Belle Isle with my companies of guards, and has orders on their arrival at the roads to detach Chavigny to command in the place with 100 French and sixty Swiss; and if by chance he whom the superintendent placed there should endeavour to make resistance, I have given him orders to force an entrance.

I had at first resolved to wait for news, but all the orders have been so well given, that, according to all appearances, the thing cannot fail; and thus I shall return without farther delay, so that this is the last letter I shall write to you upon this journey. I have since spoken upon this event with the gentlemen who are here with me, and have told them frankly that I had formed my project four months ago; that there was no one who knew of it but you, and that I had only communicated it to monsieur le Tellier two days ago, that the necessary orders might be given. I declared to them also, that I would have no more superintendents, but would labour at the finances myself, with faithful persons to act under me, knowing that that was the true means of securing myself abundance, and of relieving my people. You will have no difficulty in believing that many a one was out of countenance; but I am well pleased that they should see that I am not the dupe they imagined, and that the best plan is to attach themselves to me."

The disgrace of the unfortunate Fouquet was not sufficient for his implacable enemies; and Le Tellier and Colbert, labouring together, used every effort to bring him to the scaffold. An extraordinary commission was appointed to try him at the arsenal, and during three years he was tortured by the prolongation of proceedings, in which every existing law, every form of justice, and every principle of equity, were equally violated. The chancellor Seguier, president of the

commission, took part in the whole as an open enemy of the accused; and the two chief ministers of the king did not scruple to use all their influence to obtain his condemnation to the most severe punishment which the law could award. Le Tellier caballed in secret, and maintained some degree of decency; but Colbert pursued his enemy without disguise, and with the fierce and fanatical acrimony which Calvin displayed in his persecution of Servetus. His conduct gave universal disgust; and the injustice which was shown towards the unfortunate superintendent raised him up friends in adversity more valuable than all those which his brighter days had acquired. Even Turenne, who of all men was the least infected by the bad habit of saying severe things, which was then much affected in France, could not refrain from venting his indignation at the persecutors of the fallen minister. On some persons praising in his presence the moderation of Le Tellier, while they blamed the virulence of Colbert towards Fouquet, the great general replied, "I can very well believe that monsieur Colbert is *more anxious* he should be hanged, and that monsieur le Tellier is *more afraid* that he should not."

Day by day the friends of Fouquet became more bold and active, and the great bulk of the talent and wit of Paris was arrayed in his favour. Hénault openly attacked Colbert, in a bitter and satirical sonnet*, which in those ages of despotism might

* The lines were the following: —

Ministre avare et lâche, esclave malheureux,
Qui gémis sur le poids des affaires publiques;
Victime dévouée aux chagrins politiques,
Fantôme révéré sous un titre onéreux.

Vois combien des grandeurs le comble est dangereux;
Contemple de Fouquet les funestes reliques;
Et, tandis qu'à sa perte en secret tu t'appliques,
Crains qu'on ne te prépare un destin plus affreux.

Sa chute quelque jour te peut être commune,
Crains ton poste, ton rang, la cour, et la fortune.
Nul ne tombe innocent d'où l'on te voit monté.

Cesse donc d'animer ton prince à son supplice;
Et, près d'avoir besoin de toute sa bonté,
Ne le fais pas user de toute sa justice.

well have led him to the Bastille, or to exile. The sonnet, however, ran rapidly through the circles of Paris, and some one at length spoke to Colbert upon the subject; but that minister had his answer prepared. "Is it offensive to the king?" he demanded; and being informed that it was not, he added, "then it is not offensive to me!" But if Colbert meant to persuade any one that he was incapable of personal resentments, he undertook a vain task while the trial of Fouquet was proceeding. Notwithstanding all his efforts, however, notwithstanding the influence of Le Tellier, and the iniquitous virulence of Seguier, the majority of the judges maintained their probity; and though they justly declared Fouquet guilty of various offences, they awarded for crimes to which the law assigned no specific punishment the mildest infliction which it recognised, namely, that of banishment for life. The monarch himself, however, now stepped in, and with an exercise of his authority the most unjust, tyrannical, and infamous, changed — for the word commuted is not applicable — the sentence of the very judges he had appointed, and casting from him the beautiful privilege of showing mercy, assumed the baser attribute of revenge.

By Louis's own decree, the dreadful fate of perpetual imprisonment was assigned to the unfortunate Fouquet, instead of the milder lot of exile; and there can be little doubt that the king was prompted to a step alike disgraceful to the monarch and the man by the counsels of Le Tellier and Colbert. It has often been supposed that both those ministers feared that Fouquet might return to power; but although such might be the case with Le Tellier, whose mind never rose above mediocrity, Colbert could scarcely be supposed to apprehend any thing from a man to whom he was so superior in regularity, application, firmness, and genius. It is more probable that the popular qualities and more graceful accomplishments of Fouquet — qualities which

but too frequently excite the envy of men whose endowments are of a far higher grade — had long created a feeling of jealousy in the breast of Colbert, which had settled into that deadly hatred which none but stern and acute minds are capable of feeling. That, Colbert once having grasped the rule of the finances, Fouquet should ever be able to snatch it from his hand was quite impossible, and therefore we cannot suppose that he was actuated by any fear of the kind in his virulent persecution of the superintendent after that unhappy man's arrest at Nantes.

Voltaire, indeed, places the appointment of Colbert to the office of comptroller-general of finance in the year 1664, but that very brilliant writer is not always chronologically correct, and although I do not possess documents to prove that the arrest of Fouquet was immediately followed by the promotion of his enemy, yet all the events which took place in France between the year 1661 and 1664 leave no doubt upon my mind that the statement of Auvigny is correct, and that Colbert received the comptrollership in the former of those two years.

Without following Fouquet to his sad imprisonment at Pignerol, I shall now proceed to trace the events to which I have just referred, and which are clearly Colbert's first steps in that grand scheme of financial policy which he never ceased to follow, till the misfortunes and reverses of his master compelled him to deviate from his established principles. The office of superintendent was suppressed immediately after the arrest of Fouquet, and Colbert was appointed to the inferior post of comptroller of finance,—a post which had been exercised under the superior officers by many persons of considerable ability, but which now, transacting business under the eye of the king himself, became one of the first and most influential appointments in France.

The change from Fouquet to Colbert was felt in an equal degree by the king, the courtiers, and the

people, but felt in a very different manner. Whereas the monarch had, in former days, been dependent upon his superintendent for the supplies necessary to the maintenance of his household and the dignity of his crown; whereas he had been kept straitened in means, surrounded by difficulties, embarrassed with debts, and frequently obliged to borrow even of his servants the money which was his own, while they lived in more than kingly splendour, and scattered forth gifts with more than kingly profusion; now, on the contrary, careful frugality was rendered apparent in the house of the minister, and regal magnificence was restored to the palaces of the monarch. With the courtiers the change was still greater. Formerly when they came with projects for plundering the people, and wringing from the hard hand of the laborious the means for supporting their effeminate luxury, they had been received with smiles and dismissed with thanks; but now, the knitted brow and austere glance of the severe and frugal minister checked intrusion, disappointed flattery, and awed the baseness of corruption into silence and retreat. Greater, still greater, was the change with the people. In other times, when they had heard of an edict of finance, they ran to hear it read with trembling apprehension, certain to find that some new means had been discovered for grinding the faces of the poor, — some fresh device had been invented to wring from them the uttermost farthing. But now they saw with astonishment the promulgation of decrees for relieving them from their burdens, and they marked with deep gratitude the efforts of a king and his minister to relieve them under their wants and woes. Hope, the last possession of man, the best, the brightest gift of God, had nearly been trodden out in the hearts of the French people by years of misery and oppression; but now it blazed up once more under the influence of a juster rule, and commerce, agriculture, and manufacture, roused themselves from the lethargy of utter exhaustion, and came to for-

ward industry in gathering in the abundant harvest of nature.

How all this was accomplished requires more detail; and to explain the proceedings of Colbert fully would demand greater space than I can afford to give the subject in this work. Hitherto the royal revenues of all kinds had been collected upon the most corrupt system that it is possible to conceive, — a system which rendered it the interest of the collectors of all grades to grind to the uttermost farthing, and to enforce unjust exactions by every abuse of law; to plunder those who paid the taxes, and to cheat those who received them, — a system which in every country where it has been used has been found equally iniquitous and unavailing, and the remains of which in this country of England are a disgrace to our financial system and a burden and oppression to the people. By this system scarcely a single branch of revenue in France was not farmed out to persons called *traitans*, in the same manner that our posting duties and public tolls are let out to contractors. The evils of such an arrangement were of course enormous, under a profuse and careless minister; and the farmers of the royal revenue, men of the most corrupt and infamous character, had grown immensely opulent by the double plunder of the king and the people. In addition to this, in times of necessity, — and this method of farming the revenue continually reproduced those times, — various sorts of funds had been created upon the most mistaken and erroneous principles, which farther embarrassed the finances of the realm. When credit was at a low ebb, money had been taken up at a most enormous loss, and at an extravagant rate of interest, so that usurious annuities to an immense extent drained the exchequer into which not one half of the nominal consideration had ever been paid by those who possessed them. These annuities also were principally in the hands of the *traitans;* and against them, in the first instance, all the severity of Colbert was directed. Law was in that day and in that country but a very vague and unsatis-

factory term; and the new minister of finance, though he abandoned customary forms, and overstepped the ordinary laws of the land, can hardly be supposed to have done any thing but substantial justice in his prosecution of these farmers of the revenue. Chambers of justice were established, for the express purpose of taking cognisance of their peculations: hundreds were thrown into prison; their accounts were examined; their corruptions exposed; their enormous fortunes, made by rapine and pillage, were seized and confiscated; and the immense sums which they had gained by their exactions from the people, or their frauds upon the king, under the wise and frugal administration of Colbert were made available to the relief of those who had suffered. The funds also called *rentes* were paid off—with less assured equity—to the amount of more than eight millions, at the sum which had been received for them; and a number of other corrupt practices which had been introduced by his predecessors, and which, for a momentary relief, had been compensated by ages of difficulty, were done away with by the wise and prudent efforts of the new minister. Various taxes to the annual amount of three millions of livres were remitted within a few months after Colbert undertook the regulation of the finances, and the people felt themselves at once relieved and avenged.

Nevertheless, circumstances of great difficulty awaited Colbert in the very outset of his career. Large exportations of grain had at various times taken place from France: the harvests of 1660 had not been very abundant; those of 1661 failed almost entirely; and a severe famine was the consequence. The scarcity was so great that none but people of large fortune could buy the first great necessary of life; and the parliament of Paris issued an edict, by which merchants were expressly forbidden to form any association for trafficking in grain, while all private persons were prohibited under severe penalties from hoarding the corn. Colbert, however, with just views of the paternal character of a

monarch, exerted himself conjointly with Louis to supply the wants of the people; and his frugal administration had happily by this time accumulated sufficient funds to enable the king to buy immense quantities of grain in foreign markets, and to pour it into the provinces where the dearth was most severely felt. All these acts rendered the young king highly popular, and made him grateful to the minister who either suggested them or afforded the means for their execution. By the same acts, also, Colbert himself gained the affection and applause of those on whom he conferred such inestimable benefits, and was contented to be hated and respected by the court, if he were loved and respected by the monarch and the people. Hand in hand with these internal proceedings, Colbert pursued his plan for raising up once more the languishing commerce of his native country; for we must remark, as one principal feature in the character of this great statesman, that, unlike most of those to whom, unfortunately, the affairs of governments are frequently intrusted, he considered the welfare of the state as a whole, could comprehend, examine, determine upon, execute, every part of one vast and general design, without neglecting any of the rest; that he never sought the benefit of agriculture at the expense of manufactures, or neglected commerce for either; that the ornamental and the useful arts occupied his attention alike, and that every detail was merged in the comprehensive purpose of restoring prosperity to France.

His first efforts were in favour of commerce, which, during the troublous times of Richelieu, the wars of the Fronde, and the corrupt rule of Mazarin, had been neglected by the government, and almost forgotten by the people. Fouquet, indeed, had shown some disposition to make an effort for its revival; and it would seem that vague but grand schemes for raising Belle Isle into a great commercial port, had floated in his mind, and had even been carried into partial execution. Such, at least, were the motives assigned by his friends for the fortifi-

cations he had made, and the changes he had brought about at that port: but his fall put an end to those efforts; and, indeed, by being misunderstood, they only served to accelerate that fall. Scarcely, however, did the office of minister of finance fall into the hands of Colbert, than he also saw the necessity of securing some port upon the northern coast of France, and of framing those commercial alliances with maritime nations which would insure reciprocal benefits to France. A negotiation, therefore, was commenced with Holland, and a treaty drawn up, consisting of fifty-two articles, many of which were solely devoted to the arrangement of new commercial relations between the two countries. At the same time, however, Colbert fixed his eyes upon Dunkirk, which had been shamefully given up to England not many years before; and the great minister, perceiving the immense importance of that town to his native country, resolved, if possible, to recover it by peaceable means, and to render it the principal northern port of France.

The undertaking was a difficult one, for the pride and the interest of the English people were equally bound to its preservation; but the vices and necessities of Charles II. afforded vast opportunities to the French minister, which he in no degree neglected. The count d'Estrades, ambassador at the court of London, one of the most skilful negotiators of the day, was directed to use every means to accomplish his purpose. The creditors of the English king were instigated to press him for their money: his passions were excited to seek expensive gratifications; and the careful minister of France had already accumulated a sufficient sum to tempt a needy and unprincipled monarch to forget the interests and outrage the honour of his people. The nation murmured and remonstrated, but in vain; and in the year 1662, Dunkirk was sold to France for the sum of 500,000*l.* During these transactions, the Dutch were not inactive in opposing the views of France in regard to Dunkirk. Possessing a great share of the

commerce of the north, they viewed with apprehension the efforts of France to recover a port so well situated for commercial purposes in the northern seas. The proceedings of Colbert, with regard to Dunkirk, opened their eyes to the nature of his views in the commercial treaty which he proposed with themselves. They saw that he was determined that France should at least take a part in the commerce of Europe; and, with a policy equally short-sighted and selfish, they at first determined to oppose his proceedings, and, if possible, to frustrate the attempt; not seeing nor comprehending that there is no natural limit to commercial transactions, and that it is by no means a necessary consequence of the increase of any one state in commercial prosperity that other countries already enjoying a high situation should be proportionate losers, not comprehending that, with wise and liberal views, and prudent regulations, the direct contrary is the case; that the more ports which are opened throughout the world, the more occasions exist of disposing of merchandise; that the more ships traverse the bosom of the ocean the more rapid is the transmission of produce—the quicker the return of capital—the greater the circulation of every species of wealth—the higher the benefit and opportunities of each individual. Even when they found that they could not prevent the reunion of Dunkirk with France, they threatened highly not to sign the treaty which was under negotiation, declaring that their northern commerce would be ruined. They proposed a commercial treaty with England, and even an offensive and defensive treaty with Spain, for the purpose of interrupting the projects of the French minister, and assumed so warlike an attitude, that for some time it appeared that Colbert would have to commence his commercial projects by a severe and dangerous war. One man, however, in Holland had wiser views; and the count d'Estrades having been sent from London in order to pacify the states, found a zealous co-labourer in the celebrated pensionary De Witt, with whose assistance

and by whose influence the irritated feelings of the Dutch were quieted, their eyes were opened to a better view of their own interests, and they were led at length to co-operate in schemes which they could not prevent. The treaty was finally signed; and though the alliance thus established was of much shorter duration than Colbert originally intended, it gave him at least time to re-establish the commerce of France, and to prepare resources for punishing any other state which should attempt to injure or interrupt it.

As the mind of the reader is already engaged with this subject, we shall go on for a short time with the efforts of Colbert to extend the commerce of his country, leaving his proceedings in favour of arts and manufactures to be detailed hereafter. The life of the cardinal de Richelieu had been spent in struggling with factions, in contending with external and internal enemies, in overthrowing those ruined fragments of the feudal system which encumbered the ground of policy, and left no room for the erection of new institutions; and he had had no opportunity of promoting, in any great degree, the commercial welfare of the people whom he ruled. He had, nevertheless, seen the necessity of vigorous measures for that purpose; and to him was owing the first establishment of that company of the Indies which afterwards proved a source of wealth to France. This company flourished but for a short time under his auspices, and in the wars which succeeded the death of Richelieu and Louis XIII., it gradually fell into disrepute and inactivity, and finally selling its possessions in India to the knights of Malta, was dissolved in the year 1651. On that basis, however, Colbert now resolved to establish a new institution. In the course of the year 1663, and in the beginning of 1664, Colbert conceived and drew up the general project of two new companies,—the one trading to the West and the other to the East Indies. Though prudent, economical, and accused by his enemies of parsimony, no man, where great and important interests were con-

cerned, had wider views, or a more liberal hand than Colbert; no one knew better that pecuniary meanness can never be combined with great and beneficial enterprises; and whenever he was convinced that there was a strong probability of the result being good, no man displayed a more wise generosity in providing for every thing which might insure a favourable event. In acting upon this principle he was, however, most happily situated: he was the minister of a despotic monarch, in a country possessing vast resources; and it fortunately happened that the king himself was willing to support with magnificence those schemes the cost of which Colbert had calculated with care.

Had he had to deal with a large body of popular representatives, he would have found much difficulty in carrying forward any of his great institutions to productive maturity, or perhaps might never have undertaken them at all: for it is one of the concomitant disadvantages which are to be set against incalculable benefits in the nature of a representative government, that there is a proneness to parsimonious examination of details, an unwillingness to entertain great designs, (springing from the natural paucity, in every country, of men of vast and comprehensive minds, and a consequent majority in popular assemblies of people of an inferior intellect,) which unwillingness not only embarrasses every minister, of very extensive views, but has also a tendency to contract to petty purposes and partial ameliorations, the operations of every administration which is responsible to such a body. As Colbert was situated, however, he had but to be convinced himself of the utility of some important scheme, and to convince his master thereof, in order to obtain the necessary means of carrying it into execution; and we never find that, in all the magnificent conceptions with which the ministry of Colbert teemed, there was the slightest touch of that niggardly and avaricious spirit which loses its grasp of great advantages for fear of letting fall from its opening hand some object quite insignificant in comparison.

No sooner were the two companies of the East and West Indies projected, than they were carried forward with the most princely liberality. The king himself endowed them with a vast sum, and, by his example and advocacy, did more for their prosperity than even by the gift.* As we have said before, commerce, one of the first sources of a nation's wealth and honour, was, by the most absurd of prejudices, held disgraceful in France to persons descended from the class of nobles. By the advice of Colbert, however, Louis declared that all persons might enter into the commercial company of the Indies without in the slightest degree derogating from their nobility. Understanding, too, the character of the French people, or perhaps we might say, the character of mankind, he exerted himself to render the companies of the Indies an object of fashionable speculation. The queens, the princes, the courtiers, hurried in to make their venture with the rest; and 2,000,000 of livres was subscribed at the court of Louis himself, 2,000,000 by the different agents of finance, and nearly 2,000,000 more by the courts of law and the body of merchants. Besides these sums, the king lent to the companies, without interest, the enormous sum of 6,000,000, which, four years before, ere the hand of Colbert guided the finances of the state, Louis could not have obtained at once had it been to save his crown.

Immense exertions were immediately made by the companies to turn these great resources to the best account. The possessions of the ancient company in India were repurchased from the order of Malta; a number of others were added; amongst which were Guadaloupe, Martinique, and many other islands. Cayenne, at the mouth of the river of Amazons, was peopled by a colony from Rochelle; and the vast, productive, and interesting state of Lower Canada having been taken possession of by the French settlers, the foundations of Quebec were laid upon the banks of the river St. Lawrence. In all these transactions Colbert had his share; and though he intrusted,

most wisely, the commercial enterprises of the companies entirely to the individuals who composed them, all the great measures for securing their prosperity and safety were devised, aided, and enforced by him.

As the first step to their proceedings, the duke of Beaufort, superintendent of navigation, was commanded to clear the seas of the pirates which infested the African coast; and, pursuing them even to their ports, he inflicted so severe a chastisement upon them, that the flag of France remained respected for many years afterwards. The principal part of the sums mentioned above fell to the share of the eastern company, or, as it was called, the *Compagnie des grandes Indes;* but the company trading to the West Indies, which comprised the settlements in America, did not receive less support from the monarch or the minister. The king subscribed one tenth of the funds, and excited his court to take part in its speculations. Another company, called *la Compagnie du Nord,* was subsequently formed in 1669, which also received great encouragement, and produced vast benefits to France. But at the same time general commerce was in no degree neglected by Colbert for the purpose of favouring these large associations. In order to recall to life a species of industry which was almost entirely dead, the king gave thirty francs per ton as an encouragement for exportation, and forty francs for importation; and, to promote the art of ship-building, which had also suffered very severely, five francs per ton was granted as a reward for every ship built in a French port.

Such acts must of course be made applicable to times and circumstances; and while it is admitted that, at many epochs, such proceedings as those followed by Colbert might be unnecessary, if not detrimental, yet few will deny, who look closely to the state of France at the time, that any other means than those adopted by that great minister would have fallen short of his general purpose of restoring prosperity to France. The concluding act of the great minister

for the encouragement and protection of commerce was the establishment of a general chamber of assurance in the metropolis for securing merchants from loss at sea. The first efforts of the kind in France had been made at the different seaports, and had been undertaken by individuals; but the immense benefit which might arise from a great association for such an object struck Colbert as soon as he was made acquainted with the facts, and, though not entirely by his design, yet under his auspices and protection, the central chamber of assurance was established in the capital with all the facilities which the royal authority could grant it. The seaports were allowed to pursue their own course in regard to local companies of assurance, but every encouragement was given to them to establish a communication with that of Paris.

One of the consequences of his measures in favour of commerce, however, had an immediately detrimental tendency, which the minister was obliged to remedy by another step alone applicable to such times and such circumstances. The wars of Henry IV., the religious and foreign wars of Richelieu, the civil contentions of the Fronde, and the frequent scarcities with which France had been afflicted, had tended both by the absolute destruction of life, and by the natural check produced upon marriage, to reduce the population of the country in an extraordinary degree. While the country had not been sufficiently cultivated to support even the population which it contained, that population itself was diminishing rather than increasing; and the moment that fresh settlements were opened in distant lands, and facilities afforded for emigration, multitudes, led by hope and enterprise, proceeded to quit a country where they had known much misery, for others which imagination painted as richer, happier, more productive. Instead, however, of withdrawing the facilities which he had granted, or discouraging the emigration which was a natural consequence of his own measures, Colbert applied himself to remedy the evil result without ceasing to pursue the

good purpose. He felt sure that, by opening before the people of France the means of employing their industry to their own advantage and enrichment, he should speedily bring about a general increase of population to supply the existing deficiency; but in order to hasten the operation of that natural law, he proposed several decrees by which the people were encouraged to marry early. Every one who did so at the age of twenty was exempted from taxes for five years, and every one possessing ten legitimate children was exempt for his whole life. Such measures had of course an immediate effect, and would have produced to the full the results which Colbert anticipated, had not his calm and reasonable projects been thwarted in this respect, as in many others, by the ambition and vanity of his sovereign.

Such were the proceedings of Colbert in favour of commerce during the interval of peace which followed the death of Mazarin; nor were the manufactures of the country in any degree neglected. It had been said in former years that the wool of England and the looms of Flanders clothed the world; but since that period the people of Great Britain had more than overtaken the Flemings in the art of working the material which they had formerly been contented to produce. France had never made any great steps in the fabrication of cloths, and the only manufactory of importance had been established at Sedan, while a fabric of tapestries at Aubusson had gained some renown, but by no means equalled in its productions those of the Low Countries. Even these had of late years been suffered to fall into decay; and though the coarser sorts of woollen goods were produced abundantly, yet fine cloths of every kind were imported from foreign countries. Colbert instantly applied himself to remedy this great evil. The manufactories of Sedan and Aubusson were assisted, encouraged, and re-established; rewards were held out to every one whose exertions tended to promote this branch of industry; and in order to give facilities to manufacturers for the erection of fabrics, and the extension of their en-

deavours, 2000 livres were advanced out of the royal coffers upon every working loom, while considerable rewards were assigned for extraordinary exertions. When Colbert assumed the direction of the finances, in the end of 1661, a few hundred fabrics of cloth were all that the kingdom contained, but in seven years the number of looms had been raised to 44,000.

The working of silk also was encouraged in the same manner and with the same success, and the growth of the mulberry was promoted in the south-eastern parts of France with very beneficial results. Lyons, which had always been a city of great importance, now took its first steps in that progress which has made it the most important manufacturing town upon the Continent; and there, as well as at Tours, the wise liberality of Colbert was exercised to encourage the production of those finer goods, composed of silk, for which the former city is unsurpassed if not unrivalled. The manufacture of carpets and tapestry now rose again: that of La Sovonnerie carried the imitation of the Turkish and Persian manufactures to the highest pitch of perfection, and the tapestry of Beauvais was not inferior to that produced in the renowned looms of Arras. Six hundred workmen were employed in that city in one manufactory alone; and an immense number of hands were occupied in working lace, instructors for which art were brought, at considerable expense, both from Venice and from Flanders. The most magnificent institution of the kind, however, was the famous establishment of the Gobelins. That great building had been employed in former years for a number of purposes, and had latterly become famous for the scarlet dye there produced, for the composition of which the waters of the little stream of the Bièvre, on the banks of which it stands, were supposed to be peculiarly efficacious. Here, however, under the auspices of Colbert, the weaving of tapestry was carried to a point which it had never before reached. Eight hundred artisans received there constant employment; 300 resided in the building; and designs,

copied from the most eminent works of art, were obtained, at a great expense, for the imitation of the workmen. The whole establishment was placed under the direction of the famous Le Brun, whose taste and skill succeeded in teaching the productions of the loom to approach very nearly the most celebrated efforts of the pencil.

About the same time, a new branch of industry was introduced by the great minister into the French capital: and in the Faubourg St. Antoine, a manufactory of mirrors was established; an article which, at an age when every species of vanity was spreading far and wide throughout the land, was likely to be in very great request, but which had hitherto been fabricated almost exclusively in Venice, and had been thence exported to other countries. In this art the French soon excelled those that they imitated: looking-glasses of a larger size than those of Italy, and of an equal polish, were produced in Paris, and thence transmitted to other countries; and the object of Colbert was answered, in furnishing to the people fresh means of employing their labour, and opening to his country a new source of wealth. It would be endless to recount all the efforts of the minister, for raising up from their state of debasement the manufactures of the country in the same manner that he had raised up its commerce: those efforts were infinite, and in almost every instance they were successful. But his encouragement of agriculture was not less strenuous: for Colbert knew no distinction between different branches of industry; and in seeking to call forth the resources of France, he forgot not one of all the many ways in which man can employ his labour or his mind. The details of what he did to relieve the agricultural population would be too long for introduction in this place; but one simple fact, stated by Voltaire, is sufficient to show, by its effect, the excellence of the system he pursued. When, in the end of 1661, he received the control of the finances, we

know that vast quantities of mere produce* — corn, cattle, and salt-fish — were imported into France to supply the wants of the people and of the colonies, and that in less than six years afterwards no importations of the same kind took place; but that, on the contrary, those very articles, with the exception of corn, formed a considerable item in the export trade of France. Even machinery, that great aid to human strength, which has since worked such miraculous results, caught his attention in the earliest efforts made towards its improvement; and the secret of the stocking weaver's loom, then lately introduced into England, was eagerly bought by the comptroller of finance for the benefit of his own country. The art of working tin and preparing steel, of making porcelain, and of tanning the finer kinds of leather, which, previous to his time, had either been unknown or neglected in France, were introduced by his care, and carried to perfection under his direction and encouragement.

Here men of meaner minds would have stopped: here many a man, even in a more enlightened age, would say, that Colbert, having done every thing that he could to encourage every useful art, and to open out for the people of his native land new branches of productive industry, had done enough, and might well stop, leaving to the mind of man to pursue its own advance unaided, and to produce, according to its own necessities, all those things which adorn and beautify that existence, for the substantial comforts of which he had made such exertions to provide. Here many a man, even of our own times, would exclaim, Colbert might well pause, and leave literature, and science, and the elegant arts, to *hew* their way alone. But had he done so, Colbert, though he might have deserved some gratitude from his country, though he might have merited the esteem of mankind, as a great minister and

* It would appear that, in the disorganised state in which France had remained for many years, dearth and abundance succeeded each other rapidly, and corn was alternately an object of export and import as profusion or famine reigned in the land.

philanthropic man, would never have won that mighty name which he has so well acquired as the greatest minister that ever directed the internal affairs of any country: —as a man, the extensive range of whose mind might perhaps miss some of the minor details of any of the great branches to which his attention was directed, but omitted no important point in that vast circle of means by which society may be led on to the highest state of perfection that it is capable of reaching upon earth: by which the human mind can create for itself new objects of enterprise: by which the corporeal powers of man can always be furnished with fresh objects of exertion by which his bodily wants may ever be satisfied a ... ice of his own labour, and his reasonable desires gratified; and by which his mental aspirations after fame, or honour, or knowledge, may have constant opportunities of gratification, and unceasing stimulants to activity in the broad course of virtue and honourable competition. To comprehend all those many means of carrying on the advancement of society, in a manner at once the most rapid and the most orderly; to seize in the grasp of one powerful mind all those branches of internal government, many of which are neglected in every country, and few of which are thoroughly understood in any; to raise at once commerce, manufactures, agriculture, from a state of utter ruin and desolation to the highest pitch of prosperity then known in the world, and, at the same time, to promote the greatest efforts of the human mind in literature, science, and art, formed the fame and is the immortal glory of Colbert. To have changed the general state of France from one of the lowest depression to one of the highest prosperity was a great and magnificent achievement; and his labours in favour of commerce, agriculture, and manufactures, well merited the thanks of his country: but to have called up art, literature, and science, from the lethargic sleep in which they were plunged, and to have founded, renewed, reinspired, those magnificent institutions from which so much

light has since poured forth upon the world, deserves the gratitude of mankind at large, — deserves its gratitude for the benefits already derived, — deserves it for the eternal example of how much can be accomplished, and how easily, by one great and comprehensive mind. The vulgar statesmen of all times move with pain and difficulty, each in one petty sphere, neglecting, forgetting, or sacrificing great and important ameliorations to the petty details of daily government, the factious squabbles of party, and the minor considerations of a limited policy. Colbert moved at ease in the vast circle of universal improvement, neglected none of all its branches, and derived the power of working new benefits from his success in all.

The efforts of Colbert for the encouragement of literature and science did not wait for the success of his financial exertions. He was confident in his own powers, and postponed no means of advancing or improving society. Early in the year 1663, when he had not yet been a year and a half in office, he formed the first plan of the *Académie des Inscriptions et des Belles Lettres.* Voltaire declares [illegible] object thereof was to transmit the actions of Louis [illegible] to posterity by means of medals. As Louis himself [illegible] had at that time performed none of those actions which were properly suited to such a sort of commemoration, this could scarcely be the principal object of the institution, and I find the general view of Colbert in its foundation thus expressed in an old French work: — "He" (the minister) chose some members of the *Académie Française* to compose inscriptions, devices, and medals, which might refer to the king in particular, and to the nation in general; to find the means of reviving good taste and noble simplicity in the literary monuments which might be raised in future; and at the same time to ornament with inscriptions the principal edifices of the kingdom." This purpose is certainly much more comprehensive than that stated by Voltaire; and we find that though the Academy certainly did undertake, almost immediately, the execution of a series of medals in commemoration of great events,

thereby tending to improve an art which has been in a state of lamentable decay in Europe since the fall of the Roman empire*, yet their labours were much more extensive and beneficial; and gradually, as new objects of exertion were opened out before them, their proceedings became far more important, and generally advantageous, than those of the *Académie Française* itself. While the latter confined its efforts to purifying the language, and to enriching it by the addition of words formed upon just models and a recognised principle, the former sought out the hidden sources of history, brought forth the treasures of the past, investigated the accuracy of statements, established the purity of facts, and added to our stores of knowledge an immense contribution from which we are deriving benefit and instruction even now. Infinite was the advantage obtained by France from this institution; and had a similar one been founded in England at the same period, the history of this country would not now be that series of errors, absurdities, and inconsistencies, which it appears under the pen of even our ablest historians. The ascertaining of positive facts for the basis of correct reasoning in all historical questions was one of the principal objects of the *Académie des Inscriptions;* and the want of such means as are afforded by its memoirs for correcting our crude opinions, and verifying the result of our own researches by those of others, must be felt by every one who attempts to write upon the history of this country.†

The foundation of the *Académie des Belles Lettres* was followed, some years afterwards, by the institution of another academy of equal if not superior importance. This was the *Académie des Sciences,* which soon gave a new face to the scientific knowledge of the French people. Previous to its foundation, information, of the kind which it was destined to promote, could scarcely be found in

* Some very beautiful medals had been produced in the reign of Louis XIII. by a medallist named Varin.

† The Society of Antiquaries has done a good deal to supply the place of this institution, but, of course, have not been able to accomplish half so much as an academy, founded and governed like that of the Belles Lettres, supported by the wisdom and power of Colbert.

France, for, confined to the breasts of a few individuals, it had no voice amongst men, and no repute in society. In England there then existed a number of those men who, neglected by all governments, contending with many difficulties, excluded from those honours and distinctions which none merit more highly than themselves, have, by the fruit of their unassisted labour, and by their resolute perseverance in scientific research under every disadvantage, gained for this people the proudest place in the annals of the world as a scientific nation. But in France no very eminent men were to be met with: Picard, Richer, and La Hire, persons of whom we scarcely hear in the present day, together with the Abbé du Clos, and some others still less known, are the only scientific names mentioned at the time of the foundation of the Academy.

Their meetings were at first appointed to be held in the royal library; but, not long afterwards, apartments were assigned to them in the Louvre, where they met for many years uninterruptedly twice in every week. At the same time, however, to aid their researches, an observatory was erected in the Faubourg St. Jacques; and if the building and the situation were not the best that could have been chosen, the blame thereof did not fall upon Colbert, who left the selection to those who were most competent to judge in France. In order to give it some degree of dignity, to direct the studies of those who composed it, and to afford a certain solidity to its proceedings from the beginning, Colbert called the famous Cassini from Italy. Huyghens was brought from Holland, and Römer from Denmark; and from that moment brilliant discoveries, useful treatises, and magnificent works emanated from the *Académie des Sciences.*

Constituted as the great mass of mankind is, that which pleases any sense, however gross, that which satisfies any taste, however idle, will always receive high rewards and great encouragement; when that which instructs, elevates, and ennobles, will remain

without recompence, and too often without honour. A famous cook will always make more than a famous mathematician, if he have to appeal to popular favour. A singer will receive more for a few weeks' exercise of powers than a Herschel or a Brewster for many a laborious month; and a fiddler would think himself ill paid for one year's engagement by the sum which the historiographer of England receives during his whole life. Colbert was well aware of how little science and instructive literature could derive from the public in general; and he not only gave large sums, as an inducement for learned men from foreign countries to settle in the French metropolis; but he took care that honour and emolument should invariably follow the active exertion of great abilities, or the judicious display of learning and wisdom. He insured to men of pre-eminent genius and information that competence, without which their labours can never be carried on with freedom and advantage; and he then left them to draw any further benefit they could from the more energetic employment of their mental powers. Nothing ever proved more strongly than the result the falsity of that base and ungenerous assertion, that literary and scientific men require the stimulus of want to excite them to exertion.* While labouring under the benumbing power of need, science and literature scarcely held up their head in France: but the liberal and sunshiny policy of Colbert soon warmed them into active existence; and from that time to this a series of great men such as few countries in the world can produce has, with scarcely any interruption, ornamented the institutions which it was his pleasure and his glory to found.

The second official employment of which we find Colbert possessed was that of superintendent of the royal buildings,—an office which he purchased from Ratabon, the person who previously possessed it, in January, 1664, for the sum of 200,000 livres. He thus became,

* About this time appeared (1665) the *Journal des Savans*, the first purely scientific journal, I believe, which had appeared in Europe.

as Voltaire has justly expressed it, not alone minister of finance, but minister for the arts and sciences in France; and, under his directing mind, Paris, which had previously been but a confused mass of irregular and ill constructed buildings, soon assumed a new appearance, and put forth architectural beauties, which remain amongst its greatest ornaments to the present day. For the buildings of the Louvre, which had been left for so many years in the most incomplete state, the famous sculptor Bernini was called from Italy at a very considerable expense. He was received with honour, and rewarded highly; but between the time of his having been summoned and his arrival at the court of France two native architects had given in their plans, either of which was equal to any thing that the Italian could produce.

The first of these was François Mansard, who by his genius alone had raised himself from a very humble station in life to that of the first architect in France. In his very early youth, and while yet a simple mason, he was employed to build a house by the marquis de Maisons, one of the presidents of the parliament, and, to the astonishment of every one, he produced the Château de Maisons, the most splendid edifice which had yet been erected in France by a private individual. His plans for the Louvre, however, were not adopted, on account of the singular modesty of him by whom they were constructed: Mansard would not undertake the work, unless he were permitted to pull down and rebuild every thing that might seem to him amiss after it was done. This would have entailed so enormous an expense, that Colbert would not consent to the proposed arrangement; and the plans of the second, Claude Perault — educated for a physician, and celebrated for his anatomical knowledge, but who became afterwards deservedly one of the most celebrated architects in France — were adopted and executed by De Vau and Dorbay. To these plans, I believe, Bernini made some little additions, but no improvements of any importance,

and he received the most liberal recompences for services of no very great value.

Great changes were also effected in regard to the palace of the Thuilleries, which was formerly separated from the garden belonging to it by a narrow, dirty street, while that garden itself was flanked towards the quay by a range of insignificant houses which seemed attached to the palace, and gave it an air of dirt and meanness. Under the directions of Colbert, the street was swept away, and all those buildings which encumbered the garden were removed. The splendid terrace which now exists was constructed on the side towards the water; basins and waterworks of great magnificence, according to the taste of that day, were formed in the grounds, and the walls by which the enclosure is bounded were carried up to the palace which thus flanked one end of the gardens. Many other magnificent works were undertaken; and the painters, the sculptors, the architects of France, found abundant employment, and received liberal rewards.

At the same time we must not pass over the palace of Versailles, which was raised from the ground at the most enormous expense. It has been called a gulf, into which the revenues of France flowed never to return; but I cannot help thinking, that had not long-continued wars, supported by large sums spent in foreign countries, and large subsidies paid to foreign princes, drained the finances and exhausted the state, the money expended in France upon the erection and embellishments of Versailles would have been found to yield sufficient interest, by the employment of artisans and the circulation of wealth. Nevertheless, there can be no doubt that the first design of that building was upon a much more moderate scale than it became in the execution; and it is probable that the prudent and economical principles of Colbert were overpowered by his master's taste for splendour and ostentatious love of magnificence. Still, if the minister derive honour from the many vast and useful works that were carried

on under his administration, he must certainly share any blame that is attached to having spent large sums on an object which was at best a stupendous extravagance.

Under his superintendence, another work of greater magnitude, utility, and splendour, was undertaken and completed; and though the idea was not his, nor even of the age in which he flourished, its immediate adoption and persevering execution add again to his honour as a statesman. The narrowness of the tract of land lying between the bay of Biscay and the Mediterranean, and the facilities which the Garonne afforded for constructing a canal between the two seas, had struck the merchants of Languedoc and Guienne in the middle of the reign of Louis XIII., and a proposal had been made to the cardinal de Richelieu for the purpose of carrying that great work into execution. Embarrassed with external wars and internal discontent, and straitened by the confusion of the finances, to remedy which the qualities of his mind were but little calculated, Richelieu refused or neglected to give his support to the proposal, and for more than twenty years the project was left unnoticed by the state, and nearly forgotten by individuals. One man, however, with the persevering energy of genius, never abandoned the idea, never ceased to labour for its execution. It is true, he pressed it not forward upon the public, or upon the government, during the sad years of turbulence and disorder which succeeded to the death of Louis XIII.; but to it he devoted a great part of his own time, his own labour, and his own attention. He travelled from town to town, and from province to province, through the tract of country that was to be intersected by the yet imaginary canal: he ascertained the height of mountains, and devised the means of cutting through or avoiding them: he traced the course and calculated the volume of the various streams that flowed down from the Oriental Pyrenees: he measured distances, he constructed plans, he drew up projects; and, when at length the fame of

Colbert, as a patron of all great works, and the extraordinary tidings that, order being re-established in the finances, abundance reigned in the treasury of the king, were spread abroad throughout France, he hastened to Paris, and laid the papers which he had been so many years in drawing up before the great minister on whom the success of his schemes depended.* This personage was Pierre Paul Riquet baron de Bonrepos, an engineer of considerable reputation, a native of Beziers, a town situated near the scene of the projected work. Colbert at once embraced the project, and carried it forward with that great and persevering vigour which characterised all his actions. In 1663 the plans were first laid before him; and from that time to 1683 he never ceased to labour for their complete execution.

Although the plans of Riquet were fully sufficient to show Colbert the feasibility and the advantage of the immense undertaking proposed to him, yet more details were wanting ere the work could be commenced, and Andréossy was employed to gather together every new view that could be taken of the subject, for the consideration of the minister and the monarch. At length, in 1666, the workmen began the construction of the canal; and certainly no work which the world has produced excels in boldness of design, and in skilful execution, this great monument of the ministry of Colbert. In many places, the solid rock was cut through to form a channel, considerable hills were levelled, and difficulties of every kind overcome. At Naurouse, near Castelnaudary, a basin of 200 toises in length by 150 in width was constructed as a secondary reservoir for the waters of the neighbouring streams, which are poured thence at once into the canal, to keep up an abundant supply of water. This basin is itself filled from the great artificial lake of St. Ferréol, which, situated higher up in the mountains, measures 1200 toises in length by 500 in width, and is supported by a dike of 420 toises in thickness, and 25 toises in height. The whole art of engineering, as it was then known, was brought to bear upon the construction of

this mighty work, and locks of almost every kind were tried or adopted; while tunnels, aqueducts, basins, and sluices, each of an extraordinary character, and each admirably adapted to the situation in which it is placed, render the sixty-two leagues through which the canal extends from the Garonne below Toulouse to the lagune of Thau, near Agde on the Mediterranean, a land full of the marvels of human ingenuity and perseverance.

Two other institutions for the encouragement of the arts may as well be spoken of together in this place, though they were founded by Colbert at different periods. The first of these was the French Academy of Painting and Sculpture, the organisation of which took place in 1664, and was afterwards confirmed by letters patent from the king. During the latter years of his life, Mazarin had done something towards the encouragement of the arts, especially that of painting, and a number of artists had been called by him to the French capital. These Colbert gathered together into a society, and assigned them apartments in the Royal College; they were afterwards, however, removed to the Old Louvre, where a regular school of painting and sculpture was carried on, the members of the academy receiving a regular pension from the government. In order to give greater facilities to the study of those two beautiful arts, the minister, not long afterwards, persuaded his sovereign to buy one of the large mansions in ancient Rome; and there, amidst the master-works of other ages, to establish a second academy for French subjects, under the care and tuition of a general director. Thither all the pupils of the Parisian academy who had received prizes during their first years of study were sent, at the expense of the monarch, to receive the fullest instruction in every branch of their art; and there they were maintained for a certain time, — also at his expense, — surrounded by the choicest models both of painting and sculpture.

To render the whole circle complete, an Academy of Architecture was founded by Colbert in 1671; and it may be justly said that no class of men, who benefited

or honoured their country, — no art, no science, which increased the means of happiness, which added to the knowledge, which cultivated the tastes, or improved the minds of the people, — was left without that warm, that liberal, that enthusiastic encouragement, which is sure to draw forth genius wherever it exists, and to insure unceasing industry in every grade and profession.

While thus giving to literature, science, and art that portion of his attention which was fully sufficient to carry them forward to the highest pitch they could ever attain, Colbert neglected not those duties which weaker ministers than himself have generally considered as of exclusive importance. He did not neglect the revenue of his country in his protection of literary and scientific men, though he well knew that the very encouragement which he gave to the arts and sciences tended naturally to the prosperity of the finance by insuring the welfare of the whole people. During the whole of this time, his reform of all abuses in the department intrusted to his care was carried on with the most rigid sternness; and while he received those persons who did honour to, or conferred benefits on, their country, with smiles and gladness, the cold frown was sure to gather upon his brow, and the bitter rebuke to hang upon his lip, towards all the many plunderers of the public revenue that still swarmed about the court, scarcely believing that such a system of economy could be long carried on under any circumstances, or was compatible with the munificent protection accorded to genius, learning, and skill.

To reduce the rate of interest to five per cent., and to pay off, at least in part, the royal debt termed *rentes de l'Hôtel de Ville*, were now the two great objects of Colbert's endeavours; but in accomplishing these he created a multitude of enemies, whom his unsparing severity in words, as well as in actions, tended to exasperate in a very high degree. The body of fundholders in France at that time, instead of being composed of respectable individuals from every rank of society, formed a class by

themselves, consisting of coarse, shrewd, unprincipled, and desperate men, — in fact, fraudulent gamblers on a great scale; and notwithstanding the establishment of a better police, and the more rigid execution of justice in the metropolis, they now leagued together in the attempt to terrify the minister from his wise and judicious plans of financial reform by threats of personal vengeance. These menaces were so loud, so fierce, and so frequently repeated, that Colbert's own immediate friends and relations became alarmed, as he proceeded with cool determination to pay off the *rentes* at the rate of purchase, and warned him repeatedly of his danger. Colbert was not to be turned aside, however, and was only rendered more severe by the insolence of those who opposed him. Some anecdotes are told with regard to this part of his life which strongly display the sternness of his character. Being one day brought in contact with some of these gambling financiers, they burst forth in reproaches against him, and did not scruple to threaten him with personal vengeance. Colbert listened with calm contempt, but immediately punished the offence they had committed by ordering their arrest before nightfall. The very clerks employed under him in the business of relieving the state became equally obnoxious to the holders of these *rentes*, and were also threatened with vengeance; and so great was the terror with which some of them were seized on this account, that the principal secretary of the minister, who slept in his house, woke one night in such an agony of fear as to rouse the whole household. Colbert being disturbed with the rest, inquired minutely into the cause of the noise: the following morning the secretary received his dismissal, and the minister heard no more of the fears of his agents. The finances of the state were ameliorated; the corruption which had pervaded every inferior branch of that department was eradicated, as far as the exertions of one man, dependent in a great degree upon the will of another, could accomplish such an undertaking; and yet, notwithstanding the discontent excited amongst a

race of unprincipled peculators, the murmurs of a large and wealthy class, and the menaces of many desperate and ruined men, Colbert executed his purpose uninjured as well as undismayed.

During all these transactions, and while labouring for the general benefit of the state, Colbert had been by no means unmindful of the prosperity of his own family, nor would it have seemed in the slightest degree to his honour had he been so. Every minister has a greater opportunity of knowing the talents and peculiar qualifications of those persons with whom he is brought so immediately into contact as his own relations; and his natural duty towards those connected with him is, of course, to give them the advantage of such knowledge, provided he does not suffer partiality to interfere in excluding men of greater merit and abilities. The minister who forgets that just attention to the advancement of himself and family which was his duty as a man before he was a minister, will, in general, be found either wanting in that comprehensiveness of mind which can grasp and fulfil all moral obligations, or else deficient in that just appreciation of responsibilities which is as much a requisite quality in a statesman as in an individual. Through life Colbert evinced no greedy ambition, but his services were vast, and he felt they deserved reward: the powers of his mind were great, and he knew his capability of exercising them in the highest offices of the state with not less benefit to his country than to himself. His father, it would seem, had early received some post from the care of their connection Le Tellier; and within the first six years of Colbert's administration, we find his brother Charles Colbert marquis de Croissi, his uncle Pussort, and a number of his other friends and relations, provided with offices, wherein to display their talents and advance their fortunes. Nor can it be said that they were unworthily promoted; for each, in his particular station and department, distinguished himself by abilities only inferior to the great minister with whom they were connected.

Though economical in a high degree, Colbert evinced none of that propensity to avarice which had disgraced Mazarin; and though liberal to all merit, he displayed none of that greedy covetousness which the extravagant luxury of Fouquet had required for its supply. The natural emoluments of his office, however, were great, and the favour of the king secured ample remuneration to such services as those of Colbert. His fortune became large, and his power and influence induced many of the first nobility in France to court his alliance. Thus, in 1667, a marriage took place between one of his daughters and Charles duke of Cheveruse, and in 1671 another of his daughters was wedded to Paul duke of St. Aignan; both peers of France, and both holding high offices in the service of the crown.

Till the year 1667 the schemes of Colbert had gone on with uninterrupted success. However magnificent were the tastes of the king, and however costly was the court he kept up, the mere expenses of the royal household, the patronage of art and science, the encouragement of commerce and manufacture, and the rewards assigned to industry of every kind, in no degree impeded the economical steps of the minister, but — as he well knew they would — rather increased than diminished the revenues of the state. Louis had laboured with Colbert to give effect to all his measures, to lighten the load upon his people, and to furnish them with means of bearing easily that part of the burthen which was left. He had striven for peace with all nations; he had avoided more than one threatening war; and he saw the state of France at length more prosperous than he had ever beheld it himself or could find it represented in history. At length, however, other counsels prevailed, and disputes began between France and Spain, which in the year 1667 proceeded to the first continental war which had disturbed the calm of Europe since the treaty of the Pyrenees.

By this time Philip IV. king of Spain was dead, and had been succeeded by the weakly Charles II.; and am-

bitious hopes and views began to open out before the eyes of Louis XIV., which never ceased to occupy him more or less during the rest of his life. The greatest care had been taken by the ministers of Spain, in drawing up the treaty of the Pyrenees, to guard against two consequences which were likely to arise from the relative situations of France, Spain, and Portugal. In the struggle between the two last-named countries, it had been the policy both of Richelieu and Mazarin to give whatever aid circumstances enabled France to afford, to support the house of Braganza in its struggle to maintain the independence of Portugal. But when the treaty of peace was concluded between Philip IV. and Louis XIV., the Spanish monarch required that France should give no farther assistance to Portugal, and Mazarin agreed to refrain from doing so. On the marriage of Louis with the infanta, a certain dowry was promised to the king of France with his young bride; and she, on her part, made a formal renunciation of all claims whatsoever to any part of the succession, which might otherwise have fallen to her on the death of her father. The French monarch was a party to that renunciation; and though the king of Spain knew and declared it to be nothing but empty words, and that in default of male issue his daughter must and would succeed, yet the Spanish ministers and the Spanish people held it valid, and no party ever contemplated the probability of the matter being at all disputed unless the extinction of male heirs should leave the monarchy open to the ambition of the Bourbon race.

Philip, however, and his son, who succeeded in the year 1665, or rather their ministers, neglected entirely to pay the dowry which had been promised to the young queen of France; and Louis already began to assert the principle, that as the one party had not fulfilled the condition on which the renunciation was made, that renunciation itself became invalid. He did not urge this point, however, very strongly in the first instance, knowing, that though the time for paying the dowry had expired, yet the

Spaniards might still offer to discharge this debt, and convict him of ambition in any future prosecution of his claim; but having determined upon war, and being tempted by the ill-defended condition of Brabant, he easily found a pretext for raising claims to that duchy, and prepared to assert them by force of arms. An old law of Brabant was produced, which, by a very forced construction, was made to invest Maria Theresa, the young queen of France, with a lawful right to that duchy and all its dependencies; and it was urged that the right having existed in her as the only child of her father and mother, from the time of her mother's death, her renunciation on the treaty of the Pyrenees of any future claim to the succession of the king of Spain could not be supposed to apply to her pre-existing title to Brabant, as her father, according to the law of that duchy, was merely a tenant for life. Louis XIV., therefore, required the immediate cession of the whole of the Spanish Netherlands. But the Spaniards having refused to give ear to the fine reasonings of the French lawyers, Louis took those methods of urging his claims which he had always determined upon, and, in spite of all the pacific and economic views of Colbert, marched three armies into Flanders. In a very short space of time he had made himself master of a large tract of country and a number of important towns; and, returning to France, he followed up his conquests by seizing upon Franche Comté, which, though an integral part of France, by habits, manners, and geographical position, had hitherto remained in the hands of the Spaniards, as a part of the succession of the dukes of Burgundy.

These rapid conquests of the French king, the haughtiness of his tone on various occasions, and the prompt spirit with which he sustained the assumed r[illegible] of his crown, alarmed both England and Holland; [illegible] hasty treaty, called the triple alliance, was entered into by those two countries and Sweden, for the purpose of compelling the French monarch to desist from farther aggression upon the Spanish territories, and to fix the terms of a paci-

fication between the two belligerent powers. Mortified and angry, it is probable that Louis would have proceeded in his course, and at all events assumed a still more formidable attitude before he yielded to the demands of the allies, had not Colbert earnestly remonstrated with him, and shown him that the conduct he was inclined to pursue was highly dangerous, especially to the nascent commerce of France, and the yet unformed marine of the country. Louis yielded to the reasoning of his minister, and employed that minister's brother, the marquis de Croissi, to meet the negotiators on the part of France, Holland, Sweden, and Spain, in the conferences appointed to take place at Aix-la-Chapelle. The discussions were carried on under the mediation of the pope, — a nominal mediation it is true, but still sufficient to mortify the protestant Dutch, who assumed the character of general pacificators with the tone of dictators in Europe.

Monsieur de Croissi, however, kept the ambassadors amused at Aix-la-Chapelle while the real negotiations were conducted at Paris between Van Beuninghen, the ordinary ambassador of the United Provinces, and the ministers of Louis XIV. In all these negotiations Colbert took a share; and although Van Beuninghen assumed the haughty tone of stern republicanism, affected to treat Louis himself with rigid firmness, and played the part of some deputy from ancient Rome, the French diplomatists, more versed in the intrigues of the cabinet than the self-sufficient Dutchman, and aided by the irritable folly of the Spaniards and the sordid weakness of Charles II., completely gained their master's ends, while they concealed his views in a manner which has escaped the penetration even of the keen Voltaire. *

The king's conquests in Flanders had been obtained

* Voltaire suffered himself to be so impressed with the affectation of rigid republicanism on the part of Van Beuninghen, that he does not seem to have seen that the ambassador was made a complete tool of; and that Louis, while he offered an apparent sacrifice of what had cost him literally nothing to acquire, kept all that he had been really desirous of retaining.

during a campaign of three months, at a considerable expense of treasure and of blood. Franche Comté occupied three weeks, and scarcely required a waggon load of powder: the possession of Lisle and other important cities in the Low Countries opened to the ambition of the French monarch the whole of Spanish Brabant and Holland, even to the gates of Amsterdam; but Franche Comté led to nothing, and could only be valuable to France as a tract of fertile territory. To restore the cities of Flanders to the power of Spain was virtually to give them back for ever; for it was not to be expected that the facility with which they had been captured through the negligence of the Spanish government would not act as a warning, and insure their full preparation for the future: Franche Comté, on the contrary, enclosed on almost all sides by the territories of France, could offer no permanent resistance as soon as Louis chose to resume it, after having given it up as a peace offering. That he must make some sacrifice in order to satisfy the triple alliance, the king of France and his ministers well knew; and upon every consideration, they determined that the sacrifice should be the apparent and not the real one. Van Beuninghen was permitted to display his Roman sternness to the full satisfaction of himself and the Dutch people; the Spanish plenipotentiaries were taught to believe that Franche Comté was a highly important and most honourable appendage to the crown of Spain, though, in truth, it was attached to it by the loosest tenure; the power of the king therein was next to nothing, and the revenue thence derived nothing at all. The mediators were contented to believe that Louis made a very liberal and extensive sacrifice; and though we can scarcely suppose that either Temple, the English ambassador, or De Witt, who at that time may be said to have ruled Holland, were deceived by the pretences of the French monarch, yet all the other parties evidently were so; and Louis was suffered to retain a great and important part of Flanders, upon restoring to Spain the nominal sovereignty of Franche Comté.

By these transactions a number of towns of the utmost commercial importance were acquired for France,—towns which there was very little probability of losing, and which promised advantages as great to the internal trade of the country as to its military situation; and it is probable that, under all these circumstances, Colbert was satisfied with the results of that short war, and, though the expenses had been great, believed the compensation to be sufficient. Louis, however, by this time had tasted of the cup of military glory, against the inebriating qualities of which the virtue of few monarchs is sufficiently powerful to resist. Respecting Colbert, doing justice to his purposes, acknowledging the wisdom of his views, and admiring the firmness with which he adhered to the principles which he had laid down of a just but not a parsimonious economy, perhaps Louis might have been induced to sacrifice his own desires of renown in arms to the more rational schemes of his minister, had there not been other influence employed to oppose the counsels of Colbert, and to stimulate the passions of the king to undertake those very steps which that great statesman deprecated.

The marquis of Louvois, son of the chancellor le Tellier, a man of far greater abilities than his father, of an active, energetic, and ambitious disposition, had become one of the secretaries of state in 1666; and, jealous of the influence of Colbert, though he wisely refrained from attempting openly to ruin a man whose services, integrity, and wisdom, formed a triple wall around him, he yet determined, if possible, to lead the king in such a course as might give him an opportunity of displaying his own talents, and of obtaining a part of that influence whereof Colbert monopolised so large a share. Ostentation was the peculiar vanity of Louis XIV.; and connected therewith inseparably was his desire of military pageantry and display, his fondness for the name of conqueror, and even his desire of territorial aggrandisement. The talents of Louvois were particularly well suited to military administration; and had the defects of his temper

and his heart permitted him to be free from hatreds, partialities, jealousies, and suspicions, his genius would have rendered him the greatest minister at war that Europe perhaps ever beheld. It was natural for him therefore to desire that his sovereign should be plunged in those very undertakings from which Colbert wished to withdraw him by every means in his power; and the weakness of the king seconded but too strongly the designs of the secretary of state. Hatred towards the Dutch also, for the part they had taken in the late transactions, indignation at the haughty and uncourteous manner in which their ambassadors had demeaned themselves, a contempt for their power, and a dislike to the principles of their government, all combined in the mind of the king to give vigour and importance to the arguments of Louvois.

With bitter regret Colbert beheld his master determine upon measures which he saw must entail the most enormous expense, and that at a moment when the finances were recovering rapidly from a long period of exhaustion, and when neither the honour nor the interests of the country required measures which must inevitably interrupt the progress of the state to the highest pitch of prosperity. It soon became evident, however, to Colbert, that the king's determination was taken to humble Holland: he saw that he could not move that resolution: he perhaps saw also that it would be executed in the most costly and ostentatious manner; and he applied himself during the short interval of repose which was allowed to France to carry forward all his great schemes with the utmost rapidity, so as, if possible, to put her in a situation in which she would suffer little by the unwise proceedings which he could not prevent. One of the most important and one of the most neglected branches of the French service was the marine: few vessels of war were to be found in the ports of France at the end of the wars of the Fronde, and those few, after Mazarin took calm possession of the whole power of the government, were

suffered to remain rotting and neglected. To remedy these defects had been one of the earliest efforts of Colbert; and in the first instance, as the construction of ships could not be carried on with sufficient rapidity, he purchased several vessels of considerable size from Holland and from Sweden. In the year of the attack upon Flanders the number of the marine amounted to sixty vessels of war; and at Rochefort, Toulon, Dunkirk, Brest, continual activity and exertion were displayed in building new ships, to put France upon a par with England and Holland. In 1669 the control of the marine was more particularly assigned to Colbert; and before the year 167[illegible], sixty ships of the line, and forty frigates, evinced by the result the energetic measures of the minister: councils were established in all the seaports, for the purpose of adopting or discovering improvements in the art of ship-building, and carrying the naval service to the same point of perfection at which the army had arrived; and day by day some new effort was made to enable the marine of France to cope with that of Holland in the approaching contest, or at all events to protect the commerce of France during a war with one of the most powerful maritime people at that time in Europe.

Nothing, indeed, was left undone which the ministers of Louis could accomplish to prepare the way for his proceedings against the Dutch, and to render the result sure. The first thing to be obtained was the separation of England from the interests of Holland; and Colbert's brother was sent over for the purpose of effecting this difficult object. For some time, however, the efforts of Charles Colbert were not successful. No cause of rupture existed between the English and the Dutch: the mutual advantages which they obtained from their alliance were daily more and more felt by each nation; and Charles II., whatever might be his own inclinations, scarcely dared to propose to his people a war which was opposed by every consideration of justice, honour, and good policy. At length it was

determined to trust the negotiation to the hands of a woman; and Henrietta, the sister of the English king, who had been married to Monsieur, the brother of Louis, was fixed upon as the person most likely to influence Charles, by whom she was tenderly loved. As it was necessary, however, to keep the Dutch in that state of unsuspecting confidence in which they had hitherto remained, until such time as the treaty with England was completed, it was determined to conceal the proposed journey of Henrietta to the court of England from every one till the moment of its execution. Even then the political objects of her going were still to be kept a profound secret; and, to cover all these manœuvres, a progress through the newly acquired territories in Flanders was determined upon. Louis with his whole court set out, surrounded by the most ostentatious splendour; and, giving way at every step to the most lavish and unnecessary expense, his whole journey was one scene of festivity and display. A body of 30,000 men accompanied his march; several hundred persons of high rank were every day lodged and entertained at the king's expense; portraits, set in diamonds, rings, jewels, and even gratifications in money, were bestowed upon every one who approached the royal presence; and the expenses of a peaceful journey were not less than those which had been incurred in the conquest of a province.

After accompanying her brother-in-law and his court through a considerable part of his progress, Henrietta suddenly took ship at Calais, and proceeded to England, where, amidst the rejoicings that celebrated her arrival, she found little difficulty in overpowering any scruples that lingered in the mind of Charles. Money, it is said, had its share in the persuasions; and a treaty was eventually signed between England and France, by which the former country agreed not only to abandon Holland but to aid in her destruction. The fleets of England were to support the armies of France, and the only thing wanting was some pretext for the war. Never, prob-

ably, before, in the whole history of state intrigue, did two monarchs, bent upon wronging a neighbour, find so much difficulty in framing any pretence for the iniquity they were about to commit. The Dutch had acted with perfect justice to them, and had evinced, on every occasion, feelings friendly to France and England. The royal wolves could not even say that Holland had troubled the water which they drank; and at length the motive for war which was fixed upon as an excuse was the most absurd one that even the annals of national quarrels can display, namely offence given by certain pictures and medals.

In the mean time the preparations of France, and the probable destination of her collecting armies, did not escape the attention of other nations; but no one even made a show of averting the storm from Holland, or of supporting her under it. The empire was engaged with intestine difficulties; Spain was, as usual, inactive, and was, moreover, unwilling to call again the enmity of France upon her own head; Sweden, which had taken part in the late triple alliance, now left her confederate to her fate, and Louis hurried on his preparations, in order to crush a state which was totally incapable of resisting. Those preparations, from the extravagant scale on which they were carried on by the monarch and Louvois, must have cost no slight pain to the mind of Colbert, who, with the prophetic eye of true wisdom, beheld afar the future difficulties into which the ambition of his master would plunge his native land. Nevertheless, his genius for finance displayed itself no less strongly at moments like those of which we speak, when the ostentatious profusion of the king drew incessantly upon the exchequer, than when, seconded by Louis himself, in a time of peace and at the close of a long war, he restored prosperity to the country and replenished the exhausted treasury of the state.

An hundred and twelve thousand men were collected for the conquest of Holland; an immense train

of artillery was prepared; ammunition of all kinds was gathered from every part of the country, and a variety of new implements were invented and constructed to be tried against the enemies that Louis went forth to subdue. F[illegible] millions of francs were expended merely in preparations; and Colbert was also obliged to provide large sums for the contingent expenses of the monarch on the march. He appears to have found no difficulty, however; and the facility which his minister's skill afforded the king in procuring resources, probably increased Louis's natural tendency to profusion and extravagance.

In the mean time the Dutch had demanded, in an humble tone, the meaning and destination of the vast armaments which hung upon their frontiers, and Louis had answered with the haughty insolence which showed them that they were destined to feel the effects of his vengeance or his ambition. They accordingly looked round for means of resistance, but none were to be found. A maritime country which can be approached by land must always be a military country also, if it would enjoy security. This the Dutch had forgotten; and since the termination of their contest with Spain had neglected, in the most improvident manner, the maintenance of land forces. Their allies abandoned them to their fate; and internal dissensions weakened the little power they themselves possessed. William prince of Orange, then a young and inexperienced man, put himself at the head of 25,000 men, which was all that the States could bring into the field; and, while the more enthusiastic republicans abridged his power, lest he should use it against their liberty, made such faint efforts as his situation permitted to oppose the progress of the invader.

Not contented with his own forces, Louis XIV. engaged several of the neighbouring princes, by means of subsidies, to join their mercenary bands to his, for the subjugation of a country which had scarcely any hope of resistance; and Colbert thus had the pain of seeing

the finances of the state wasted in the unnecessary extent of preparations made for carrying on an unprovoked aggression. Nevertheless, his zeal, his ability, and his clear-sighted appreciation of all the resources of the country, enabled him to meet the exigencies of the times without difficulty, and to supply to his monarch the means of insuring rapid and extensive conquests as the summary payment for the labour and the treasure cast away.

We must not pause upon the wars of Holland for any great length of time, though the history of the king's first campaign against the States has been given by one whose name recalls an anecdote highly creditable to Colbert, and that too in regard to a point where the great minister had shown himself deserving of considerable censure. Pellisson, the friend and dependant of Fouquet,—who had been cast into prison with him, and had aided considerably in thwarting the views of Colbert against the unfortunate superintendent, by the information which he dexterously contrived to convey to Fouquet of the destruction of some of the most dangerous papers which could have been brought against him,—had been set at liberty after a time, being clearly innocent of any participation in the misdeeds of others. His fidelity to his patron, and the honest courage with which he had dared considerable danger in order to save his benefactor, had not escaped the eyes of Colbert; and though the very instance of Fouquet showed to what extremes his hatred could be carried, yet his mind was sufficiently lofty, his heart sufficiently noble, to appreciate and reward fidelity and courage, even when exercised in the cause of an enemy. In the indignation which Pellisson had felt at the injustice displayed towards Fouquet, his pen had never ceased to pour forth stinging invectives against his oppressors, in the course of which Colbert came in for his full share of vituperation. Still Colbert could not be induced to persecute him; but, on the contrary, after suffering him to exhaust his powers of epigram and abuse, and sink back into the quieter pursuits of literature, he offered

him employment under the government; and step by step, as his abilities developed themselves, raised him to higher occupations; showing himself a patron as liberal, but more judicious, than Fouquet himself. In the course of his advancement Pellisson accompanied the court throughout the campaign against Holland; and to his pen Louis was indebted for an elegant and detailed, but somewhat flattering, account of his aggression upon the peaceful territorities of the Dutch.

In the same profuse manner in which he had made his preparations, the magnificent monarch of the French carried on the war when it was begun. Advancing through the country more with the air of a benefactor than a conqueror, he took advantage of the propensity of the Dutch towards commerce, and bought every thing they would sell, which unfortunately consisted, not alone of provisions and ammunition, but, in too many instances, of cities and fortresses. As he marched on almost with bloodless triumph, town after town, and province after province, surrendered with scarcely any resistance; the passage of the Rhine was effected with the greatest ease; and the prince of Orange was obliged to abandon some lines he had hastily constructed, and retreat before the enemy. The provinces of Utrecht, Overyssel, and Gueldres were conquered in two months; and Naerden, in the immediate vicinity of Amsterdam, was in the hands of the French. The citizens of the capital, divided into two vehement parties, became rather more exasperated against each other than united by the imminent danger that threatened them. One party, desirous of peace on any conditions, proposed to send deputies to Louis, to demand what terms he would grant; the other, though it contained all those who had hitherto offered such a feeble resistance to the French monarch, now advocated a continuation of the war under every circumstance of disadvantage. The advisers of peace however prevailed, and the deputies were sent accordingly; but from Louvois they met with nothing but insult and derision, and from Louis re-

ceived, as an ultimatum, a series of propositions which at once drove them to despair. The French king demanded the whole territory to the south of the Rhine, a number of towns and fortresses not comprised therein, a payment of 20,000,000 francs, an annual acknowledgment of his sovereignty, and the re-establishment of the catholic religion, against which their fathers had fought and bled for upwards of a century.

The deputies returned; and there was now only one consideration amongst the citizens, whether they should embark themselves and their families on board the ships, which had won their glory and created their wealth, and, sailing to Batavia, found a new people in another quarter of the globe; or whether, adhering at all risks to the great and magnificent city which they had raised from the bosom of the waters, they should either die in defence of their liberties and homes, or drive back the oppressor from their gates. The latter alternative was chosen. The dikes, which had cost so much labour and treasure to construct, were cut in several places; the produce of that extraordinary land was swept away; the ocean rushed in as a defence round those who had won their empire from his bosom; and the navy, which had borne the riches of Holland to every quarter of the earth, and maintained their glory as a maritime people upon every sea, sailed in and formed a floating rampart around the city that sent them forth. Such energetic courage showed the French monarch that he had calculated wrongly in his haughty demands upon the Dutch,—that, taking them unawares, he had been able to capture their cities and drive back their armies, but that he could not conquer a nation resolved to perish in defence of their liberties.

At the same time the other nations, who had at first looked on with supine indifference, now saw and were alarmed at the dangerous consequences of their inactivity. The empire began to awaken from its lethargic idleness; Spain, seeing the arms of France sweeping round both sides of her Belgian possessions, learned to

tremble for their security; the English nation became ashamed of the mercenary profligacy of their king, and his ministers to shrink from the responsibility of yielding any longer to his anti-national policy. Louis XIV., seeing clouds of difficulty and danger coming fast over the short sunshine of his early success, left the conduct of his armies to the great generals who accompanied him, and returned to Paris in the end of July, 1672, to enjoy the applauses of his people, and to concert with his ministers the means of averting the storm which was gathering round him in every quarter. But that storm was not to be diverted. Monterrey, the governor of Spanish Flanders, detached 10,000 men to the assistance of the prince of Orange; and the emperor in haste ordered Montecuculi, at the head of 20,000 men, to advance instantly to support the Dutch. While the great Condé remained to make head against the forces under the young stadtholder, Turenne advanced towards the Rhine, in order to prevent, if possible, the junction of the imperial troops with those of Holland; but in this purpose he was frustrated by the skill of the general who opposed him: and the state of the country, the presence of a large and increasing army, the active exertions now making in the Spanish Low Countries, and the preparation of new armaments in the empire, soon compelled the French generals to evacuate the Dutch provinces as rapidly as they had been acquired.

In the mean time, the king had been by no means inactive; and the most busy negotiations had been going on in every part of Europe, in order to raise up allies for France, and occupy the enemies who threatened to interfere with her conquests. Immense sums were spent in bribing different petty princes of Germany, in fomenting the disturbances in Hungary, and in pensioning the needy and debauched Charles II. of England. Little was gained in any quarter, indeed, except in the latter, where for some time longer the English continued to afford the disgraceful aid which Charles had promised in the oppression of the Dutch; but in almost all his

other negotiations Louis failed, the dangerous tendency of his ambitious views being too apparent to the eyes of all to be concealed by fair speeches, or to be rendered palatable even by bribes.

While Condé, Luxembourg, and frequently Louis himself, maintained the glory of the French arms in Belgium, Turenne made head against Montecuculi in Alsace, and Crequi often risked and sometimes lost as much by his rash and heedless daring as he gained at other times by his courage and talents. In the course of all these wars, however, both Louis and his minister Colbert displayed their peculiar high qualities in a greater degree than even in the midst of uninterrupted success: Louis, calm, active, prompt, was always found ready to reward talent, activity, and exertion, and to show generous forbearance in all cases where the imprudence, or the misfortune, of his generals produced a disappointment of his hopes and wishes. Colbert, on his part, continued his efforts for improvement, exerted himself with increasing activity, as the difficulties of the moment created new calls upon his attention; and, while he directed his efforts principally to support his sovereign in the critical situation wherein he was placed, he forgot none of the other objects which had previously occupied his mind, nor suffered himself to be diverted from working the general benefit of the people, while, by labour, economy, and wise financial measures, he supplied to the monarch the means of carrying on the war with success. The numbers of the marine increased every day; and whereas in 1672 only thirty French vessels had joined the English fleet, and they had produced very little effect in the various actions with the Dutch, in 1673 forty ships, besides fire-ships, were sent to swell the naval force of England; nor was the advantage only in number, for by this time, instead of being inefficient, the French had become capable of contending unaided with the fleets of Holland, even when those fleets were commanded by De Ruyter.

It was not alone in this respect, however, that Louis in

the course of this war had cause to congratulate himself upon the aid of such a minister as Colbert; whatever were the exigencies, whatever were the difficulties of the moment, — was an army to be speedily equipped, was a foreign prince or a foreign minister to be subsidised, was a governor to be bribed, or a commander to be bought, money was never wanting to the king's necessities; and all those embarrassments, anxieties, and delays which had impeded the views of France in former wars, had counterbalanced the skill of her generals and the bravery of her troops, were now utterly unknown, through the provident care of the minister of finance. Louis, in the course of the second year of the war, when such sudden and enormous expenses had been provided for and discharged, was obliged to have recourse to Colbert for an extraordinary supply, in order to accomplish a conquest on which he had long determined, and which he only yielded, in one instance, in the hope of resuming it very soon. Franche Comté was scarcely now better prepared to resist than it had been at the time of its former subjugation; but the Swiss, who called themselves the protectors of its liberties, had been alarmed by the former attempt, and were now not needlessly jealous of a monarch so dangerous to his neighbours as Louis XIV. The moment, therefore, that there appeared a probability of his invading Franche Comté, they were loud in their opposition; and had they been steadfast therein also, the ambitious designs of Louis would have been thwarted in that quarter. They were themselves capable of sustaining the county against the power of France, divided as it was by other adversaries; but no such activity was required of them: the emperor and the king of Spain demanded permission of the Swiss cantons to march their troops across that territory for the defence of Franche Comté; the Swiss hesitated; Louis XIV. had recourse to the resources of Colbert; a large sum of money was instantly sent to the leaders of the cantons, and the permission was refused to the imperial troops.

[illegible] had no foreign territory to pass, [illegible] marching his forces at once into the province, [illegible] made himself master of the whole district with but little more trouble than he had experienced on his former invasion.

A variety of successes and reverses followed; and throughout the campaigns of several years we find the armies of Louis sometimes defeated, sometimes victorious; but still, upon the whole, advancing in every direction, and extending the French territory far beyond its previous limits. In the meanwhile, conferences for the purpose of arranging a treaty of peace had been held first at Cologne, and afterwards at Nymwegen or Nimeguen; and although for some time no party really exerted itself to put an end to a war the result of which was very doubtful, at length more serious measures of pacification were adopted; and the marquis de Croissi, with the maréchal d'Estrades and the count d'Avaux, carried on the negotiations on the part of France under the mediation of England. Long delays succeeded; and the evident unwillingness of France to treat, without very great concessions on the part of Spain and the empire, had more than once nearly brought the negotiations to an end: but at length the terms were settled, chiefly, it would seem, by Croissi and sir William Temple, and the peace of Nimeguen was sealed by all parties in the course of the year 1678.

By that treaty France obtained, at the sacrifice of a part of her late conquests, a very considerable augmentation of territory. Eleven important towns in Flanders, and the whole of Franche Comté, formed a specious compensation for the war; and the vanity of Louis, and of his people, was sufficiently gratified by the provinces he acquired, and the tone that he assumed. But Colbert saw more deeply into the disadvantages of war, and felt in the commencing difficulties of the finance what were the real results of the military success which dazzled the eyes of the nation. Although he might judge that, both by geographical situation and

national character, the district called Franche-Comté was absolutely, a part of France, and was worth [illegible] effort to acquire; although he might see that extension of the frontier on the side of Flanders was likely to be highly beneficial to the country, both in a commercial and military point of view; yet he felt that the vast sums which had been swallowed up in a six years' war, the interruption of commerce, and the pressure upon the people, rendered the purchase far too dear. We can conceive nothing more painful, nothing more difficult to support with equanimity, than for a minister, full of just and extensive views for the benefit of his country, and possessing the certainty of genius in regard to the result of those views if carried into operation, to behold them frustrated by the petty passions, vanity, or pride of one under whose control he is forced by circumstances to act. The financial views of Colbert were no doubtful theory, formed upon an hypothetical basis, and tending only to an uncertain result; but they were, on the contrary, a concatenation of vast but ascertained principles, fixed upon the immutable foundation of the nature of man, and of whose consequences there could be no doubt, even had they not been proved at the commencement of this very war, by the experience of ten years' continual and rapid advance towards an unequalled state of prosperity. Neither Colbert, nor any one else in the realm, could doubt what would be the result of those measures, if carried on uninterruptedly, which had raised France from the most profound depth of commercial depression, to a point of wealth and industry far beyond any that she had ever reached since the foundation of the monarchy; and yet the will of the king had necessarily interrupted those measures, and forced upon Colbert a change of schemes and efforts for the purpose of supporting a needless and expensive war.

What those means were, to which the great minister was obliged to have recourse for the purpose of affording his master supplies during the contest with Holland, Spain, and the empire, we must now consider; and

endeavour, if we can, to show, in the briefest and simplest language, the difference between the financial proceedings of Colbert and those who had gone before him, in times of difficulty, when the support of large armies acted as a continual drain upon the exchequer. The very first preparations, as we have stated, for the war with Holland, required, in 1672, an expense of more than 50,000,000 of livres: the whole revenue of the state at that period amounted only to 117,000,000; and the pensions and subsidies which Louis granted to foreign princes; the bribes and gratuities which he showered with a profuse hand upon those whose services were either future or past; the daily expenses of his splendid court, and the constant supply required for his voluptuous pleasures; the encouragement of arts, sciences, manufactures, and agriculture; the vast expenditure on public buildings, and a thousand minor calls upon the liberality of the government, — left little or nothing of that revenue to be applied to the payment of troops, the purchase of ammunition and provisions, and all those incalculable costs which the maintenance of large armies occasions without producing any return. The consequence was, that in the course of that war, which lasted upon the whole between six and seven years, a deficiency of between 800,000,000 and 900,000,000 of livres was felt by Colbert, and supplied by him by the employment of a great number of those methods of raising money which he most condemned, and which had most injured the country under the administration of his predecessors. The value of the currency had in France, as in most other countries, been subjected to great variations; but the fatal resource of altering the currency was of course one of the last to which a wise minister would apply, and we find that the debasement of the coin was checked under the reign of Louis XIV., so long as Colbert held the government of finance: Voltaire asserts, indeed, that Colbert pushed the imaginary value of the *mark* of silver from twenty-six francs, where it was at the time of his

coming into power, to twenty-seven, and twenty-eight; but between his death and that of Louis XIV. it was carried to the enormous extent of forty. The measures to which he had recourse were the creation of imposts, the erection and sale of new offices, and the raising money by loan, both in the form of *rentes*, and upon the new imposts with which he was obliged to burthen the people. Such were the means to which he had recourse, and such were the means which had been employed by his predecessors. The only apparent difference between his own proceedings and those who went before him, was his reluctance in regard to tampering with the currency: but there was a much greater real difference. Whereas, in former times, money applied for in moments of great exigency by ministers of little credit, small financial knowledge, and inferior economy and regularity, was only to be obtained at an immense sacrifice when borrowed, and with the loss of nearly three quarters in collecting, when produced from taxation. It was obtained by Colbert with ease at a moderate rate of interest, and with little, if any, depression of the credit of the state. The new imposts, though obliged to be forestalled, were collected with accuracy and regularity; and the simplification of every branch of the public accounts, and of every official department connected with finance, which had been effected by Colbert on his very first entrance into the ministry, produced ten times more benefit, when the pressure on the exchequer became extreme, than had even been the case when that exchequer was overflowing with the superabundant wealth of a peaceful and prosperous country. It is not too much to say, that had those 800,000,000 been required under Fouquet, it would have cost the state at least four times the sum to have obtained them; and even then, many delays and impediments, intrigue, negotiation, and suspense, creating new difficulties to the government, and a long train of after expenses, would have taken place ere the money was paid into the treasury. Nothing of the kind now occurred. Though

abhorring the system on which he was obliged to act, though condemning the extravagance he was forced to supply, Colbert insured, that neither hesitation nor delay should frustrate the views of his master, or increase those costs which he was anxious to put a stop to altogether. Supplies were no sooner wanted, than they were ready: his prudence foresaw the demand before it was made; and by taking time to find the means, the means were found at the least possible charge. Thus, though driven from his own system, and obliged to have recourse, in a degree, to the bad one which had been employed by others before him, the clearness of his intellect, and the orderly arrangement of his mind, prevented the evil from becoming so great as it might have proved in the hands of any other man; and rendered a long war, carried on in a magnificent but extravagant manner, as little detrimental to the people as possible.

Nevertheless, it must not be supposed that, during the whole course of this costly struggle, Colbert did not oppose, as strongly as it was possible for a minister to do, the detrimental course that Louis was pursuing. After the first conferences touching a peace which were held at Cologne, he clearly perceived that Louis, full of the vanity of military glory, was deceiving both his enemies and himself, in regard to any sincere desire for tranquillity; and was, in fact, determined to carry on the war on the same scale in which it had been commenced, till a complete triumph enabled him to command terms which would satisfy both ambition and vanity. This conviction being more and more strongly forced upon him every day by the inattention with which the king treated his remonstrances in regard to the financial difficulties that threatened, Colbert at length determined to display to the monarch the real state towards which he was hurrying France, and then to retire from a post which rendered him no longer a benefactor, but rather an oppressor of the people. He accordingly proceeded to Versailles, where Louis then was, surrounded by all the splendour of the most magnificent court in Europe,

listening from morning till night of the glory of his conquests, and the renown of his arms, and shutting his eyes to the miseries which his people suffered from the excessive burthens with which he daily charged them.

Admitted to his usual audience, Colbert laid before the king a clear statement of the condition of France, and presented to his sight a striking comparison between the then existing state of the French nation and that which it had enjoyed before the commencement of the war. He showed him, in the picture of the past, a people happy and contented; commerce flourishing, agriculture producing large returns, manufactures spreading, and daily generating new sources of wealth, arts encouraged, science promoted, and magnificence and splendour reigning in the court and in the city, while an overflowing treasury and increasing revenue attested the prosperous state of the people, and the wisdom of the rule under which they lived. On the other hand, he showed Louis a nation, at the end of a four years' war, unable to pay the taxes with which they were loaded, commerce withering, agriculture carried on with difficulty, manufacture beginning to decrease, the people complaining loudly, and suffering the utmost misery; while an immense debt, an empty treasury, and a failing revenue, showed the dreadful drain of an unprofitable and unnecessary war. The king was struck, but appeared more gloomy and discontented with the representation than determined to remove the evil; and when Colbert concluded by demanding permission to retire from a post which he could no longer fill with peace and honour to himself, or benefit to the country, Louis kept silence, and the minister was obliged to retire without an answer.

It was the custom of Colbert, on returning to his dwelling after the fatigues and labours of the day, to go first into his library, where he usually found assembled a number of the literary and scientific men of the age, with whom he conversed for some time, both for the purpose of gaining a general

knowledge of the progress of the country, and in order to relieve his mind from the burthen of weightier thoughts. On his return from Versailles, however, feeling convinced that he should soon receive a notification that his resignation was accepted, and only supported by the consciousness of having performed a great duty, under the impression of having lost a high station, and sacrificed immense power, Colbert avoided his library, and shut himself up in his cabinet. His servants, perceiving the agitation in which he returned, ran to inform his wife, with whom he lived on terms of confidence and affection, and she almost immediately joined him, demanding to share in the grief under which he evidently suffered. He then explained to her the circumstances and informed her that, rather than oppress the people any farther with fresh taxes, he had begged the king's permission to retire from office. To many a woman, especially in those days, the blow might have been severe; but she instantly replied, that to retire into private life upon such a motive was much more honourable to her husband than to enjoy the highest rank in the state; and expressed the pride with which she would follow him into obscurity in consequence of such an action.

No notice was taken, however, by Louis, of the demand of Colbert; and instead of showing towards his minister the same coldness which had marked his demeanour in the first mortification of disappointment, he took every opportunity of distinguishing him in the presence of the court. The nature of Colbert, however, was inflexible; and seeing that the party of Louvois was determined to protract the war, he again represented to Louis the state of the country, and remonstrated boldly upon the continuance of the war. The monarch heard him now with patience and attention; entered fully into the details of the subject; and the result of their conference was the appointment of the plenipotentiaries who concluded the peace of Nimeguen.

The war of 1672 was not, however, the only mor-

tification which Colbert received at this period—was not the only instance in which his wise policy was crossed by the folly and passions of others, and his best schemes disappointed, to the great loss and disadvantage of France. At the accession of Henry IV. the huguenots formed nearly a twelfth part of the population of the kingdom; and it is probable that, had the persecution which they suffered under the house of Valois been continued for many years longer without interruption, they would eventually have outnumbered their adversaries. Under Henry IV., however, persecution ceased: the protestants were declared eligible to every office in the state; a court of justice was established in Paris, called La Cour de l'Edit, for the purpose of trying causes between protestant parties; and such privileges were granted to them as secured them the free exercise of their religion, and seemed to guard them for ever against the intolerance of their adversaries. Though Calvin burnt Servetus for differing with him in opinion, yet the religion which he taught is naturally not one of proselytism; and the huguenots, as soon as they found themselves free from oppression, made but few attempts to gain converts from the Roman church, neglected many precautions for their own security, and in a great many instances, as soon as honour was no longer implicated, conformed, for the sake of convenience, to the religion of the majority.

Not so the catholics; attached to a religion from which the spirit of proselytism is inseparable, they used every means, even under Henry IV., to gain over the huguenots to their own faith; and as soon as the weak son of that monarch succeeded to his great father, intrigues for the renewal of persecution commenced. In various instances, by grievances and exactions, the huguenots were driven into revolt; and Richelieu, whose religious views were probably very moderate, punished those severely as insurgents whom he cared little about as sectaries. After crushing their power, expelling them from their strong holds, and depriving them of all

those privileges which rendered them dangerous as a body, he left them unmolested in the exercise of their religion; secure, in the insignificance to which he had reduced them, that they could never again embarrass the government by insurrection. They had now, both in numbers and in importance, decreased very greatly; they were peaceable, active, industrious, and amongst the first whom the liberality of Colbert called into active exertion in works of manufacture and commerce. They thus became in a very short time amongst the most useful communities in the state; and Colbert, whose whole mind was utterly untouched with bigotry, saw in them nothing but honest, active, and intelligent subjects, to whose farther efforts for the general prosperity of the country it was his duty to give the greatest encouragement. It is said even, that he had devised a scheme for casting into their hands a particular branch of commerce, from which the rest of the subjects of France were excluded on account of their religion. The ambition and insolence of the Portuguese in Japan had created such an abhorrence of every one professing or attempting to promulgate the Roman catholic religion, that the ports of that important country were shut against all persons of the obnoxious creed; and it is said that Colbert intended, at the time he founded the company of the Indies, to take measures for establishing a commerce between France and Japan by means of the protestant merchants of the former country.

Mazarin, though a prelate of the Roman church, had shown rather a fondness for the protestants than otherwise; and Colbert in this respect followed in his steps: but it was sufficient that the minister of finance respected and protected the huguenots, for Louvois to make them the objects of persecution. Le Tellier, his father, in matters of religion bigoted and intolerant, and in natural character possessing many high qualifications for a place under the banners of Ignatius Loyola, had found the bonds which bound him to Colbert of a very fragile nature, as soon as a rivalry in the favour of their young

monarch ended in the preference of Louis for the minister of finance. Thus, after having co-operated with Colbert in the destruction of Fouquet, he would soon have sought the overthrow of his own connection, had he not wisely seen that the enterprise was above his strength. He joined willingly, however, with Louvois, in doing all that they could to obstruct the operations, and disappoint the views, of Colbert; and the natural inclination of both father and son led them to direct their efforts against the protestants, as much to mortify the rival minister as to serve the purposes of their own harsh bigotry.

The mind of Louis was unfortunately but too accessible to arguments against any who differed with him, especially in religion. His mother had imbued his spirit from a very early period with a great respect for catholicism; and though libertine by habits and character, and showing throughout life no great respect for the precepts of religion, the forms and ceremonies were always in his eyes of great importance, and he felt his honour as a king and his zeal as a catholic affected by any opposition to the doctrines which he himself professed and supported. The persuasions, therefore, of Le Tellier and Louvois were seconded by the king's own passions and prejudices. Colbert had nothing on his side but justice and common sense, and of course was obliged to yield. All that he could do was so far to break the force of the torrent as to prevent it from rushing upon the unfortunate protestants at once and overwhelming them; and, while Louis himself covered his unjust proceedings with an affectation of consideration for the huguenots, Colbert laboured hard to place every check he could upon the king's proceedings, in order to prevent the protestants from being driven to despair, and the state from being deprived of the services of a large body of active and ingenious men. But he had to contend with superior power, and with keen and active enemies: step by step the persecution of the huguenots became more and more decided; and amongst the first and most

serious measures used against them was the abolition of the court called La Chambre de l'Edit, which, though composed almost exclusively of catholics, had, according to the confession of the protestants themselves, rendered the most impartial justice in all their causes.

Colbert struggled against this proceeding as long as it was possible, but was in the end forced to yield; for he was not only resisting the arbitrary prejudices of his master, the religious prejudices of the clergy of France, and the envious activity of Louvois and Le Tellier, but he was resisting also a stronger and more overpowering force—the spirit of the age in which he lived. It was an age of persecution; the last, we trust, that the world is ever destined to see. Nor is it unworthy of remark, how universal was the spirit of intolerance amongst men at that moment, how entirely separate and distinct it existed from any doctrine or tenet, but pervaded the actions of the most different sects as a sort of epidemic disease of the mind. In France, the protestants were subjected to the most base, treacherous, and cruel persecution; in England, the catholics met the same fate; and hundreds of executions, the murder of innocent and unoffending men, and the readiness with which every atrocious conspirator was listened to and rewarded when he accused either the noblest and the best, or the low and the infamous, of acts which were then considered as religious crimes, proved the virulent activity of the same spirit amongst a people of a calm and reasoning character, and of a religion of peace and tolerance. In Scotland, again, that very form of church government which thus assailed the catholics in England was in turn attacked by the fierce intolerance of another sect, and roused itself up to retaliate, with the most fierce and fiendish cruelty, upon the men who resisted its authority. Against this general tendency of the human mind it was in vain to contend; and, though the whole of Colbert's policy was pacific—though his mind was sufficiently enlightened to see no difference, as a statesman, between various creeds and persuasions—though the only distinction

that he suffered to have weight in his grand views of internal policy was the distinction between the orderly, industrious, and loyal, and the turbulent, idle, and disaffected,—he was obliged, against his will, to countenance the commencement of those proceedings against the protestants, which, as the jesuits obtained greater influence over the mind of Louis, were carried on till the whole body of huguenots, with a very few exceptions, were compelled to evacuate France.

After the abolition of their peculiar court, they were soon restricted in the exercise of their religion, the number of their churches was limited, and the limit became more narrow every day; they were forbidden to intermarry with catholics; the education of their children was interfered with; they were excluded from various offices and privileges; and the most unjust and shameful means of every kind were employed to seduce, or to drive, the youth of the huguenot community into conformity with the Roman catholic church. Colbert still resisted as far as it was possible; and without his opposition, there can be no doubt, the stern virulence of Louvois, the bigoted enthusiasm of Le Tellier, and the arbitrary impatience of Louis XIV. would have carried these proceedings much more rapidly to the pitch of severity they afterwards reached, against a body of men who, notwithstanding the efforts of the cruel minister, maintained their heretical dogmas in opposition to the will of their royal master.

At length, however, in 1681, it was declared that huguenot children of seven years old were competent to make a voluntary renunciation of their religion, sums of money were distributed to work conversion, and the gentle persuasion of catholic dragoons quartered upon the heads of protestant families was employed to hasten the operation of faith. The consequences were now what Colbert had all along perceived they would be. The huguenots, the most industrious class of French manufacturers, began to fly on every

side, in order to prevent the perversion of their children's minds, and to escape the iniquitous infraction of all the sweet domestic ties of life. England gladly invited the fugitives to her shores, and promised them protection and assistance. Holland offered support and encouragement; and the city of Amsterdam alone built a thousand houses for the reception of the exiled protestants of France; the German Lutherans received them as brothers; and Louis began to see, too late, the evil result of the steps he had taken, and to employ means of a still more detrimental nature to check the emigration which his injustice had produced.

Flight was forbidden upon pain of death and confiscation; legal murders were carried on daily, with scarcely a pretence of law; and judicial assassins were never found wanting to execute the bloody wishes of a soft, voluptuous, and libertine court. Death alone, with all its terrors, was not considered sufficient to intimidate the huguenots from following their religion or flying from its persecutors; and the horrid punishment of the wheel in numerous instances followed the slightest resistance to the tyrannical will of an intolerant sect. In the end, the edict of Nantes was formally revoked; and that law, which had been so continually infringed by those who were bound to maintain it, was swept from the records of the realm. Ere that act took place, however, the eyes of Colbert were closed to the mad proceedings of those whom he would have led in a better track; and we must now return, to follow the course of his actions in circumstances less unfavourable than those which it has just been our task to display.

No sooner had Colbert raised up the drooping commerce of France, restored agriculture to a state of prosperity, and given to arts and manufactures the impulse which carried them on through all after years, than he turned his attention to the laws, by which the peaceful exercise of industry, the enjoyment of the fruits of labour, and that general security without which every earthly good is of little value, are insured to mankind.

There can be little or no doubt that to his suggestions may be attributed the general reform of the law, which took place without intermission from the year 1667 till the whole of that compilation called the Code Louis was completed. A number of the most famous jurisconsults in France were selected for the purpose of purifying the laws by which France was governed; and Seguier, Lamoignon, Talon, and Bignon, with several others, were employed for many years in preparing an entirely new collection of statutes. Louis took part in the discussions himself; but it was upon the counsellor of state, Pussort, the uncle of Colbert, that the monarch principally relied, and by his advice the decisions of the king were generally directed.

In 1669, Colbert was appointed one of the secretaries of state, and may be considered from that moment as combining in his own person the offices of minister for the interior, the marine, and of finance. The amelioration of the law, therefore, fell more immediately under his superintendence; and labouring assiduously with Pussort, he not only endeavoured to purify the source but to regulate the administration. The order in which the different objects of legislation were noticed, is stated by Voltaire to have been as follows: the civil code was the first that appeared; then the code respecting forests and rivers, one of greater importance in France than in this country; then the code respecting manufactures; then the criminal code, the code of commerce, and lastly that of the marine.

So far did the mind of Colbert run on before the age, that he made efforts — however incomplete and ineffectual — for the amelioration of the condition of colonial slaves; a race of men who, till he appeared, had certainly been regarded and treated as if they were not human beings. Kept in a state of ignorance and debasement, used like beasts of burthen, and deprived of every means of improvement, they had perhaps shown less intellectual capabilities than the races which oppressed them; but certain it is, that those who did so oppress

them took advantage of the brutalising results of their own injustice as a pretext for perpetuating that injustice; and that Colbert was the first who saw the necessity of guarding the unhappy negroes against the excesses of those who claimed an iniquitous right to their persons.

Great reforms also took place from his suggestion, and under his direction, in the proceedings of the courts and the general administration of justice; and amongst other beneficial changes was the doing away with private jurisdictions in Paris. Previous to this period, the courts of the king were not the only ones to which recourse could be had in the capital; and the right of administering justice in certain districts of the city was claimed by the archbishop of Paris, the abbot of St. Germain, the grand prior, and the abbess of Montmartre: each had their particular officers, and each had a crowd of lawyers belonging to their court. The extent of jurisdiction possessed by each was a question of continual difficulty; and the transfer of causes from one court to another, with frequent appeals to other tribunals, and disputes between different bodies as to their different rights, caused interminable confusion, immense expense, and a protracted delay of justice in many of those very cases where promptitude was the most required. A number of noblemen also possessed a minor extent of jurisdiction, and in almost all these cases the right was very much abused: justice or injustice became a saleable commodity, and the interpreters of the law made it speak the language which their own interests dictated. By the advice of Colbert, all these jurisdictions were swept away, and the courts of the king and his officers were declared to be those to which alone the people could apply for justice.

This reformation of a particular abuse was accompanied by the suppression of a particular crime; a crime which originated in an age of barbarism—springing from the habits of barbarous nations—was maintained through centuries of superstition, and has descended to ourselves, partly supported by the prejudices of the higher classes, and tolerated by shameful negligence and a breach of

paramount duty on the part of legislators, judges, and kings; — I refer to the practice of duelling, which, in France, had been carried to a higher pitch of extravagance than in any country of Europe, from the remains of that fierceness which the people derived from their Frankish ancestors, together with the want of that calm consideration of the true principles of honour, which shows that honour is based upon something more than mere animal courage.

Whether we consider duelling with a reference to the law of God or the law of man, we can but consider it as calm and deliberate murder. No Christian, we believe, who is any thing more than a mere professor of doctrines that he does not understand, or a weak assenter to a book which he has never read, will require any proof, that to slay another in a duel, or to go out for the purpose of committing that act, is as much murder in the eyes of God as the shooting of an inoffensive passenger upon the high road; nor is it less clear, that he who goes out without the intention of taking the life of another, but exposes himself willingly and knowingly to be put to death in a duel, for no benefit to his fellow-creatures, or any portion thereof, must, in the eyes of a pure and almighty Judge, be trebly guilty—as one who, in his own person, commits the awful act of suicide, as one who facilitates another in committing the dreadful crime of murder, and as one who sets an example to others of a sin and a folly to which they want but too few inducements. As long as the heart of man, in general, is what it is, no encouragements will be wanting to the commission of this crime; and it is a duty which every Christian, which every brave man, and which every man of honour, owes to his fellow-creatures, to set his face against it.

That, according to the law of man in every civilised country of the world, and according to the abstract principles of justice and equity, it is also murder, there can be no doubt either. Every law of every Christian land declares that he who kills another — unless in his

own defence, or under sentence of the law, or authority of the state — is a murderer; and the general pretence upon which the execution of this law has been evaded by unjust judges and perjured juries has been, that the offender committed the offence in defence of his own person, because the victim was armed for the same crime. But it is a principle of law — and a most excellent principle also — that no one can either benefit by his own wrong, or can plead, in extenuation of his own act, that another was engaged in committing equal evil. The person who shoots another in a duel goes there for the purpose of committing murder; and the fact that he is at the same time engaged in another criminal act — that of aiding another to commit, or attempt, murder on his own person — cannot be received by the law, either as an excuse for his crime, or a mitigation of his punishment. Instead of such a fact rendering the visitation of the law less severe, it should, on the contrary, add to the weight of punishment, were not that punishment already, for the crime of murder, the highest that the law recognises.

Considering the question in regard to equity, much weak and unsubstantial reasoning has been used — sometimes by judges to mislead a jury, and sometimes by advocates in defence of their client — in order to show that men in particular ranks and classes in society are compelled by circumstances to commit this act: honour has been talked of, and the prejudices of society, and the necessity for there being some punishment for offences of which the law does not take cognizance. But are we to hear such arguments maintained in the very temple of justice itself — before that tribunal where there should be no distinction of persons, of classes, of professions? — are we to be told, ay, and in the very sanctuary where equity should reign supreme, from which every thought or consideration should be banished but that of rendering equal justice — are we to be told, that that which is murder in a labouring man, that which would doom him to ignominy and a disgraceful death,

shall, in a man who wears a better coat, and works not with his hands, be considered as an untoward event, after which he is not only suffered to go free and unchastised, but is sent forth with the mingled pity and admiration of those, who, had they kept their oaths and remembered their duty to God and man, would have sent him to the gallows? If the law be defective in punishing certain offences, let the law be amended; but let no man take it into his own hands.

In whatever way we consider the question, it becomes more and more evident what is the duty, and ought to be the conduct, of legislators and judges upon the subject. Is revenge the motive for duelling? Then is the motive in itself a crime. Is the occasion of the duel some light word or casual offence? Then is the crime the more inexcusable from the slightness of the cause.* Honour has been spoken of, and the necessity of keeping up the spirit and courageous habits of the people; but honour consists in doing nothing wrong, or base, or unlawful, not in murdering or being murdered; and in regard to courage, we need but say, that the bravest nations never knew the existence of such a practice, and the bravest men have ever set their faces against it. The Romans and the Greeks were utterly unacquainted with such a degrading and absurd custom: they needed no such means of showing their courage. Brutus and Scipio, Pericles and Leonidas, Alexander and Cæsar, Epaminondas and Themistocles, found means of establishing the reputation of brave men without turning their swords against their friends and companions; while many a man who goes forth to fight another according to the evil practice of the present

* If a labouring man kill another in attempting to get money to feed a starving family, he is sent to the gallows without mercy; and justly,—as no man can be suffered, without peril to the whole frame of society, to commit such an act on any pretence: yet it is very doubtful whether the punishment tends greatly to check the crime. With duelling, on the contrary, there is no man on earth who can doubt that the punishment which the law really assigns would be effective, if put in execution. Both reason and the experience of all countries prove it; and yet we suffer laws at once sanguinary and ineffectual to exist, while laws that are just, necessary, and would undoubtedly be effectual, we suffer to be evaded every day.

days is, in truth, a coward; a coward to prejudices which he feels to be unreasonable, and to the opinions of men whom he thoroughly despises. At all events, he is a murderer, according to the law of God, and according to the law of man. Those who encourage him in the act are accessaries to the crime; the judge who gives such a charge as knowingly to induce a jury to acquit him is culpable before God, his country, and mankind; and the jury, which by its verdict pronounces him not guilty, violates the oath administered to it on entering that court. A monarch, also, has his share of the responsibility, and, if he fail in enforcing justice, a great share of the crime.

Those who have most strenuously exerted themselves to put down this barbarous crime, have generally been men so eminent for their courage as to be beyond all suspicion of fear. Gustavus Adolphus — he whose person was the mark of every imperial soldier — he who, at the head of his cavalry, was found in the thickest of every fight, and who died covered with wounds in the moment of victory — utterly abolished it from his army, and gave an example of what might be done by a great king, a fearless man, and a wise legislator, to put a stop even to a vice which assumed the name of virtue. Richelieu effected the same thing in France during his administration. In latter times, we have seen Frederick the Great, and the present stern and upright ruler of the mighty republic of the United States *, direct their efforts to the same great cause; and Colbert, at the period of which we are speaking, — a man whom no personal fears could turn for one moment from any just and honourable object, — now urged upon Louis XIV., a sovereign distinguished for his personal bravery and for his approbation of every species of courage, to treat with the utmost severity a crime which was a proof of any thing but a virtue which they both admired.

A famous combat which took place between eight

* General Jackson.

persons, four against four, in the year 1663, and which terminated in the most lamentable manner, gave an excellent opportunity for announcing the monarch's determination never to pardon again. This was the more necessary, as, after the death of the cardinal de Richelieu, during the licentious and unbridled period of the Fronde, the practice of duelling, to which Richelieu had put a stop, was renewed with more virulence than ever. Multitudes of men of rank and distinction were slain by the hands of their political opponents, and the opinion was daily gaining ground, that there was something honourable and spirited in this infraction of the law. Louis announced his determination, and adhered to it, of treating offences of this nature as any ordinary case of murder. For some time it was never believed that the king would keep his resolution: but on the very next instance the king sternly rejected all solicitations for pardon. Prayers, entreaties, and tears on the part of the offender's relations were all employed in vain: the monarch declared that the very arguments used to palliate the particular offence, were the strongest arguments against his showing mercy, that the high rank of the criminals would render the example afforded by their punishment the more striking, and that the prevalence of the crime required him to be more severe in its repression. The offender was accordingly left to suffer the award of the law; a few more such instances of wholesome severity followed; and duelling may be said to have been put an end to in France, till a relaxation of all wise measures took place at a period and under circumstances that do not come within the scope of this work.

In his proceedings for the reformation of the mode of administering justice in France, Colbert met with but little opposition, although the persons to whose peculation and rapacity he put a check were scarcely fewer in number than those against whom his financial measures had been directed: their knowledge of the law, however, rendered them aware of the power which Colbert possessed

over them; and the example which he had made of the *traitans* who had resisted, was too recent to be forgotten, and too severe to be despised. I find only two instances in which his beneficial measures were strongly opposed; the one by the parliament of Toulouse, which gave a decree against the execution of one of the royal edicts for the regulation of what were called the *exploits*, — a branch of the business of the courts carried on by the inferior officers, and comprising subpœnas, executions in judgment, and distraints. Colbert immediately wrote to the first president of that parliament, setting before him the folly as well as the danger of opposing the royal will in a matter solely conceived for the benefit of the public; and, after some hesitation and show of reluctance, the courts of Toulouse were forced to submit, and reverse their decree. The next instance in which he met with opposition was in regard to the stalls in the public markets; the lieutenant-general of police endeavouring to resist the execution of some resolutions which Colbert had been forced to adopt concerning them: the minister, however, maintained his authority; and, though the inferior officer attempted to support himself by the clamour of the lower classes, he was at length forced to obey.

Immediately after the peace of Nimeguen, a grand festival was given in Paris, called the Carousel, in regard to which some anecdotes are told, which, as they affect Colbert, must not be passed over in silence. Frustrated in their views of protracting the war, and frustrated as they well knew by the advice and remonstrances of Colbert, Louvois, and the party attached to his interests, determined that the success of the minister of finance should not be so complete as he believed it to be, and that he should find the expenses of the first year of peace not so greatly different from those of the war as he hoped they would be. They therefore suggested to the gorgeous and pageant-loving Louis XIV., that to give a great and expensive entertainment to the ministers and strangers who crowded the capital

after the restoration of peace, would increase his importance in the eyes of the world, and teach other nations, who were all suffering from the exhaustion of a long war, that his power and resources were unbounded. Louis required no great exhortations to enter into their views: passionately fond of splendour and display, he was soon persuaded to give the fête which they proposed, though, in the first instance, he limited his views to a moderate expense. Gradually, however, additions were made to the plan originally proposed: new diversions and pieces of pageantry were suggested by the courtiers; and at length the most splendid and ostentatious schemes were sent in for the approbation of the monarch, by a class of men who made it their business to devise for his luxurious court new scenes of splendour and festivity.

The only difficulty anticipated by any of the parties was likely to spring from Colbert; but Louvois and his friends looked forward with pleasure to the mortification and embarrassment of the minister of finance. He dared not, they believed, oppose the wishes of the monarch, and yet would be severely grieved to cast away an immense sum of treasure upon such unproductive pageants. Louis himself, however, contemplated the announcement of his project to Colbert with some degree of apprehension and uneasiness. He respected and loved the man whom the others hated: he venerated the very feelings that this new extravagance was likely to outrage; and he wished not to hear arguments that he could not answer, against a scheme which he was bent upon executing. He took every means, therefore, to prepare the mind of Colbert before he spoke to him upon the subject, or rather to drive the minister to speak to him thereupon in the first place; he caused the intended carousel to be mentioned in his presence more than once, and he employed his courtiers and dependants to touch upon the subject in conversation with the minister. Colbert, however, maintained an inflexible silence; and nothing that could be done induced him to take the slightest notice of the

scheme which was now labouring in the mind of the king and all his courtiers.

At length, as money was only to be obtained through his mediation, Louis spoke to him upon the subject, at once excusing himself for entering upon new expenses when the finances of the state were already desperately embarrassed by the late wars, and assuring his minister that it was his wish to conduct the fête on a scale as little costly as possible. Colbert's face became grave and severe at the very mention of expense, and he reminded the king of the state of the country, and the difficulties he encountered in procuring even the necessary supplies. As his majesty, however, he added, gave him to understand that the matter had been considerably talked of in the court, that it had got abroad amongst the people, and even that foreign courts had been taught to expect such a display, it was necessary, of course, to yield to a measure, against which, under other circumstances, he might have been tempted humbly to remonstrate.

The king replied, that it was his intention to choose the least expensive of the plans, and that he trusted no great additions would be made to the burthens of the people. To his surprise, however, Colbert differed with him in regard to the necessity of economy, alleging, that if the reason which his majesty had assigned for giving the fête at all, — that of impressing foreign nations with a high idea of his power and resources, — was valid, it implied that the festival must be fully as magnificent, if not more so, than any which had preceded it. Louis willingly yielded to any schemes of expense which his provident and economical minister was disposed to sanction; and Colbert took away the various plans for the carousel with him, with the king's full permission to choose which he thought fit, and calculate the expense. The minister soon informed the king that he had made his selection and his calculation, and that the expense would be 1,800,000 francs; a sum far more important in that day than at present. The king was shocked and astonished; and, for the moment, it is said, believed

that Colbert had chosen the most expensive plan, and made the most extravagant calculation, for the purpose of getting himself easily out of the difficult situation in which Louvois and his party had placed him. He replied, however, that, since such was the case, he would give no fête at all; that he saw no means of obtaining such a sum at such a moment; and that his object was not to ruin or distress his people for the amusement of his courtiers. Colbert again presumed to differ with his sovereign, saying, that the fête having been publicly announced, the king could not recede from it with any consideration for his own dignity: he added, that if Louis would leave all the arrangements to him, he would take care that the carousel should be as magnificent as possible, and that the money should be forthcoming.

The king having consented, Colbert used means to ensure that the approaching festivities should be made known in all the courts of Europe, and to exaggerate the splendour and magnificence with which they were likely to be decorated, in the terms best calculated to attract all the gay and volatile, the splendid and the extravagant, from every other capital to that of France. At the same time he called together the general farmers of the revenue, and notified to them, that for the next six months the king would call for their accounts as a master dealing with his clerks; and to compensate for this sudden derangement of the system into which the exigencies of the war had forced him to relapse, he promised them the bonus of a million, well knowing that the advantages would more than make up for that expense. Some months intervened before the period announced for the festival; but the news of immense preparations going on in the French capital caused it to be crowded with wealthy strangers as the time drew nigh. The city was scarcely large enough to contain the multitudes that flocked into it; the price of lodgings rose very considerably; the circulation of money became more and more rapid; and peace and idleness, with the pleasures and allurements of a magnificent court, and the habits

of thoughtlessness too frequently engendered by living in a strange country, caused enormous sums to be spent daily by the visiters who now flocked to the French metropolis.

At length the day appointed for the carousel approached; but, to the disappointment of the monarch, Colbert announced that the workmen had not been able to finish the immense preparations in which they were engaged, and that the spectacle must be delayed at least fourteen days longer. To amuse the strangers, however, he proposed that a ball should be given at the Thuilleries. If the postponement of the carousel annoyed the visiters, the ball gave universal satisfaction, although all who were admitted to the monarch's court were obliged to order new dresses, either for that or the after festival. Other amusements were devised, leading to still greater expenses; and at length the carousel took place, exceeding in magnificence and in splendour all that had been anticipated. The king beheld it with mingled pleasure and apprehension; and when Colbert presented himself after the whole was concluded and the accounts made up, he gave the highest praise to the excellence of the arrangements, but eagerly demanded the sum total of the expense. His surprise and his pleasure were equal, when he found that that which had been calculated at 1,800,000 francs, had, by the care, skill, and attention of his minister, been reduced to two thirds of that sum: and his satisfaction was doubled, when he found that, by Colbert's arrangements, the clear revenues of the royal farms for the last six months had been augmented by 2,000,000 of francs, after the payment of a bonus to the farmers; so that, deducting the expenses of the fête, very nearly 1,000,000 accrued thence to the coffers of the king. Colbert, too, had reason to be satisfied; for he had not only gained a triumph over his adversaries, but he had given a lesson to his sovereign.

Louis might well value his minister, and support him against all the power and insinuations of his adversaries:

but about this very period he had nearly been deprived of those services which were only destined to be continued a few years longer. The health of Colbert had suffered considerably under his constant application to the affairs of state; and in accompanying Louis on a progress which the monarch made through his newly acquired territories in the Low Countries, he was seized with an intermittent fever of a very malignant form, which soon reduced him to the brink of the grave. At this time the use of the Peruvian bark was unknown in France, but it had been successfully administered in England; and an English physician, who happened to be at the court of Louis at the time, recommended it strongly to the friends of the minister. It was accordingly made use of under his direction, and effected a rapid cure.

While serving the state, Colbert did not fail to use his influence for his own relations, nor neglect the education of his children. His son, the marquis de Seignelai, had been educated under his own immediate eye and inspection, and had early shown those talents and powers of application which were possessed by almost all the members of the family of Colbert, and which afterwards distinguished him in so high a degree. All that was wanting when he grew up to manhood, was greater experience, which was necessary to correct a certain inconsiderate promptness that naturally fell to the share of a quick and talented youth, brought up in the midst of affluence and splendour, knowing no reverses, sorrows, or disappointments. In order to acquire this degree of experience, Colbert sent his son to travel in Germany, Italy, and England, under the guidance and direction of a friend of Pellison's, named Isarn*; and on his return, finding him greatly improved both in knowledge and in judgment, he confided to his care the whole direction of the marine, which he himself had

* According to the account of La Houssaye, this personage was by no means highly gifted; but that author speaks with a certain degree of disappointed acrimony of all those who were patronised by Colbert.

raised to so high a pitch. At this period were formed, at an immense expense of money and of labour, the ports of Toulon, of Brest, and of Rochefort. The naval force of France was increased to more than 100 ships of the line, many of them bearing above 100 cannon. Sixty thousand seamen were always ready to assert the power of France upon the bosom of the ocean; and wise laws and regulations were devised and enforced, for the purpose of rendering this force as effective as the state of science and the character and circumstances of the French people would admit.

The nephew of the minister, Nicholas Desmarets, was also educated under his eye, and brought up in the habits of business of which Colbert himself had found the vast advantage. Judging with clear-sighted accuracy, even where the partialities of nature might well have led away his judgment, the minister saw that, notwithstanding the brilliant talents of his son, his nephew's character and mind were better fitted for the principal post which he himself occupied; and, consequently, he plainly indicated his purpose of training him up to the execution of its functions, leaving his sovereign to bestow it upon him if he found him worthy of it. He used no means, however, to give a bias to the king's judgment; and, after his death, the monarch himself fixed upon another to occupy the important office of controller of finance. It was long before Desmarets was called to regulate the fine and easily deranged machine which the hands of Colbert himself could hardly keep in order; and, when he was so called, the instrument had been spoiled by the rude blows and unskilful management of others.

The marquis de Seignelai remained in the less difficult post of minister of marine, and performed its duties with such a display of talent, that Voltaire was tempted to give him a higher station on the roll of fame than even his father. But Time, the great justiciary, has rendered to each his due. Independent of raising France with the strength of a giant from the depth of adversity into which she had sunk, and placing her on

the very summit of prosperity, Colbert left behind him institutions that will never die, and stamped the seal of his own great genius upon the very mind of the nation. Seignelai instituted nothing, though he improved much, and in no degree affected the character of the people amongst whom he lived: the one will be remembered as the greatest and most beneficent minister that ever lived; the other is already forgotten.

In the welfare and promotion not alone of his son and his nephew, was Colbert deeply interested; but we know that his brother, the marquis de Croissi, owed to his influence, as well as to the great talents he himself possessed, the rapid advancement that he met with under Louis XIV. Lyonne, one of those who had passed through the troubles of the Fronde without losing the favour of the crown, remained secretary of state for foreign affairs after Louis himself had assumed the direction of his kingdom; and had obtained for his son the survivorship of his place. At his death, in 1670, however, the son was not found competent to the execution of such an important task; and Louis XIV., after long deliberation, cast his eyes upon Simon Arnaud, marquis de Pomponne, who had been previously engaged in various embassies, and had displayed a considerable degree of talent as a negotiator.

Amiable and mild in his manners, a man of learning and of wit, Pomponne was more calculated to shine in society, or to meet the ambassadors of foreign nations in the quality of envoy, than to give force and dignity to the whole transactions of a great monarchy in its relations with other states. We have the word of Louis XIV. himself for the fact, that every thing which passed through the hands of Pomponne lost in vigour and dignity,—an inexcusable fault in the eyes of a magnificent and ostentatious monarch. Nevertheless, the natural kindness and magnanimity of Louis prevented him from dealing severely with his foreign minister, till it became necessary to put an end at once

to a worse habit than that of merely softening the communications of the king to foreign nations. The pleasures of domestic life, and the elegant and graceful amusements of a cultivated and classical mind, were suffered by Pomponne in some degree to interfere with his duties to the state, and occupied his time and attention when graver matters required immediate consideration.

In the year 1679, the marquis de Croissi had been sent to the court of Munich to negotiate a marriage between the dauphin and the princess of Bavaria, for the purpose of engaging the duke of that country in the interest of Louis XIV., whose ambitious views [illegible] rendered it probable that the war between France and the empire would speedily be renewed. The advantages which Louis would gain by this alliance were so evident, not only to the French monarch himself, but also to the emperor, the king of Spain, and many of the German princes, that numberless intrigues were set on foot to frustrate his views, and every thing was done to prevent the duke of Bavaria from listening to proposals which were undoubtedly as much to his own interest as to that of the king of France. The good sense of the duke, however, and the skill of Croissi, were enough to counterbalance all the manœuvres of those opposed to the marriage: but, nevertheless, the Bavarian prince made use of the arguments suggested to him against it, to render the negotiation as favourable to himself as possible; and at one time considerable apprehensions were entertained at the court of France lest the alliance should not be concluded. No sooner was it definitively agreed to, than Croissi wrote off a double despatch, the one addressed to his brother, the other to the minister for foreign affairs, informing them of the fact; and, at the same time, pointing out some peculiarities in the temper of the princess, which rendered precautions necessary in regard to the formation of her household. Colbert was upon the spot, and, receiving his despatch, at once communicated his intelligence to the king in the course

of the same day. Pomponne, however, was in the country, occupied, we are told, in the care of his gardens, and the pleasures of domestic life; and it was not till the king had received notice of the alliance being concluded, and had taken all his measures in consequence, that Pomponne was even aware of the arrival of a messenger. Louis, as might be expected, was not a little angry at the negligence of the foreign secretary; and, on his presenting himself before the monarch with the despatches which he had so tardily received, Louis informed him that the whole business was concluded, and that his services would be dispensed with for the future.

The friends of Pomponne accused Colbert of intrigue, for the purpose of creating a vacancy in the office which he sought to obtain for his brother; and, knowing the kindness of the king endeavoured to induce Louis to recall Pomponne to his councils. The French monarch, however, remained firm; and it is evident, from a memoir written in the king's own hand, and still existing, that he had long contemplated the dismissal of the secretary for foreign affairs, on grounds to which both Colbert and his brother were utter strangers. Croissi, immediately on his return from Bavaria, was appointed to the vacant office, and displayed in it the same talents which had marked his embassies to foreign courts, only increased in vigour and activity by the greater scope which was now afforded for their exercise. Although these actions, by exciting the envy or mortifying the pride of others, called a number of attacks upon Colbert; although he was represented to have intrigued for the elevation of his family, and to have committed an act of dishonest treachery in regard to the secretary Pomponne; yet we render him but simple justice, in saying, that history does not afford the slightest proof whatsoever of his having suffered himself to be betrayed, in the course of these transactions, into any base or underhand deed. The more we examine the statements of his adversaries on these points, the more their envi-

ous motives become apparent. But, about this part of the life of Colbert, we find him engaged in an affair from which it would have been desirable to have kept himself free. He committed, it is true, no great moral crime, and it might have been difficult, if not impossible, to have resisted the commands of the king. Nevertheless, we regret to find him mingling his high name in any shape with the libertine pleasures of the monarch. The carousel which we have noticed, was by no means the first of those pageants which had taken place since the accession of Louis XIV. One had been given before, in 1660, and one in 1664; but those spectacles had been devised for the purpose of covering a number of acts of amorous gallantry, displayed by the king towards the beautiful but unfortunate La Vallière.

Afterwards, in the height of her fortune and her favour, Colbert had become the friend of the king's mistress; and had been appointed by Louis himself, to superintend the education of their illegitimate children. The passions of the libertine monarch, however, soon led him to new objects of attraction; and though he did not absolutely neglect the former object of his love, and showed her some delicate forbearance, which her many virtues well deserved, yet the frequency of his infidelities could not, of course, pass without observation. Willingly closing her eyes, La Vallière would not see the estrangement of the man she loved, as long as it was possible to avoid it: at length, however, his connection with madame de Montespan became so apparent, that she could no longer even affect not to see it; and foreseeing that any influence which she still retained over the mind of Louis must soon be at an end, she determined at length to break through ties which had never been without their pangs. Quitting the court suddenly, she accordingly retired to the convent of St. Mary, at Chaillot. This was the second time that she had sought the refuge of the cloister. She had been torn from it by the king himself, in the first instance; and had returned to the court — quitting virtue and retirement,

which she loved, for a man that she loved better, and for splendour which she despised. Her second flight, however, inflicted some pain upon the king, and caused much confusion in his court: but the difference of his conduct on the present occasion, sadly evinced to La Vallière that she had lost the power and the attraction which virtue had once given to beauty and sweetness. Louis came not himself to seek her; but some remains of tenderness, some feeling of decency, and a great desire to prevent any thing like confusion in his court, induced him to send two persons to her, in order to persuade her to return. Those persons were Colbert and the duke of Lauzun: the latter famous for his powers of persuasion; the former supposed to possess considerable influence with her, both from long friendship, and from the station which he held in regard to her children.

We cannot find that Colbert showed any disinclination to the task, although he must have known that he was persuading the unhappy girl to return, not only to vice, but to misery. He succeeded, [illegible] the duke of Lauzun, in bringing her once more back to the court, however; and, as we have touched upon it, we may as well conclude her history here. She lingered on, suffering all the pangs of jealousy and disappointment, at the court of a king by whom she was no longer loved, and whose courtiers looked upon her with the mortifying scorn which is the lot of fallen favourites. Louis suffered her not, it is true, to be treated with any degree of indignity; but still, his coldness became more and more apparent every day, till at length, wearied with the reproachful aspect of her sorrow, he himself consented that she should retire from a world which she had learned thoroughly to abhor, from a court which she had always despised, and from a king whom she still loved, but could no longer esteem. In the year 1674 she fulfilled her resolution, and took the veil in the convent of the Barefooted Carmelites, of the Rue St. Jacques; where she lived for many years, weeping,

perhaps, that she had ever known a court, but never showing the slightest symptom of regret at having quitted it.

The fortunes of Colbert were now at their height, but his happiness was by no means so great as it had been at a former period. Indeed, it is scarcely possible to conceive, that a man who could undertake and execute such mighty projects for the benefit of his country, could know many unalloyed pleasures, when a great part of the good he had produced had been overthrown by the ambition and weakness of others, and when every day evinced the progress of the state towards new troubles and increasing expenses. The proceedings of the king towards the huguenots was a continual source of pain and anxiety to that wise minister; but still more were the measures which Louis pursued in regard to the neighbouring nations, after the peace of Nimeguen had given the hope of tranquillity to Europe. If every foreign state beheld those measures with surprise and alarm, how much more cause of apprehension and of pain must Colbert have had, who not only saw deep and profoundly into the ambitious views of Louis, but beheld, with a clear foresight of a great and comprehensive mind, the ruinous consequences of those views to France, the annihilation of her commerce, the exhaustion of her finances, the depression of her power, and the misery of her people. He who could say, when surrounded by courtiers, and with the first men of the land crowding his saloons and coveting his favour, that, provided he could see his projects for the good of the people successful, and abundance reigning throughout the kingdom, he should wish to behold the grass growing in his own court-yard, could not perceive the approach of destructive warfare, and the coming overthrow of all his best-laid schemes for the good of the country, without feeling that deep and bitter disappointment, that despair of human nature, that disbelief in the possibility of doing great and permanent good, which is forced but too

often upon those who labour for the advantage of their fellow-creatures, and is the severest of all pangs to a noble and philanthropic heart. It is told of Colbert, that, one day standing with a friend at the window of his country house, called Sceaux, and gazing over the fields which lay stretched out before him, he fell into a profound reverie, from which he did not rouse himself for several minutes. When at length he withdrew his eyes, his friend demanded the cause of his long and unwonted reverie. "In gazing over these fine fields," replied Colbert, "I could not help thinking of the many others that I have seen in different places. What a rich and fertile country is France! If the enemies of the king would but let us enjoy peace, we might in a few years procure for the people that state of prosperity which Henry IV. promised them, and that there should not be a peasant throughout the whole land, who, on the Sunday, could not have his fowl in the pot."

Such were the aspirations of Colbert; but those aspirations were, unhappily, not destined to be fulfilled: the ambition of Louis himself, and the constant presence in the cabinet of a party which opposed the wise views of the finance minister, were but too successful in hurrying on the ruin of France. Measures soon took place, which, although they are praised by Voltaire, (upon what principle it is difficult to divine,) must be looked upon, by every one who does not consider that there is a peculiar and looser garb of morality fitted for kings and politicians, as highly dishonourable to Louis himself, and were ultimately advantageous in no great degree to France. While Holland, Spain, and the empire disbanded their troops, the French king remained fully armed; and, like a robber who takes advantage of the hour of sleep to plunder the unguarded, he prepared to make use of the time of peace in order to pillage those whom he had just covenanted to leave unmolested. At Metz and at Brisac he established courts for the purpose of investigating, discovering, or forging claims upon all the small states of the Rhine, as having formerly

formed part of the territory of Alsace, though, according to the acknowledgment of Voltaire himself, they had passed, from time immemorial, under other dynasties.

The elector palatine and the elector of Trèves were cited before these tribunals, and despoiled of a considerable part of their possessions. In vain Spain and the empire protested against such proceedings; Louis seized upon the territories he claimed, and set threats and remonstrances at defiance. The city of Strasbourg also was surprised and taken by Louvois in his name; and the town of Alost was boldly claimed by the ambitious king, upon the insolent pretence of its having been forgotten by his ministers in the treaty of Nimeguen. Spain hesitated in regard to granting this extraordinary demand, and he immediately caused his troops to blockade the city of Luxembourg, which was afterwards captured.

It now became evident to Colbert and to every one — notwithstanding various favourable circumstances, which, by preventing Spain and the empire from expressing their indignation in arms, enabled Louis to proceed in his aggressions unopposed—that the existing peace could not be of long continuance; that a war of a more bloody, protracted, and decisive nature must ensue; and that the monarch, even in the time of apparent tranquillity, would be obliged to maintain armies almost as large and expensive as those required for actual war. Colbert more especially felt the pressure of present, and saw the approach of future, difficulties. The peace which had been obtained, could not be rendeerd availing to the interests of France, unless it was secure; and the very acts of his own monarch rendered it quite the reverse. Thus, none of those great ameliorations could be effected now, which had so rapidly restored prosperity to the country during the first years of the great statesman's administration; and day by day showing him what he must expect from the future, made the the cup of the present more bitter to his lip.

Grief and disappointment are the two most wearing

diseases which can affect the human frame, and may in their course produce any other to which mortality is subject. During the years 1681 and 1682, the health of Colbert visibly declined; he yielded nothing, however, to diminishing strength, but continued to labour in the service of the state as indefatigably as ever. His family and his friends remonstrated; and even the king is said to have entreated him to be more careful of that health, the continuance of which was of so much importance to the country. But still Colbert continued in the same round of constant exertion, till a sudden attack of stone forced him at once to cease from executing the duties of his station. It soon became evident to those who attended him, that the state of art in that day could furnish no relief; and Colbert himself saw, with perfect tranquillity, the approach of death as the termination of a painful illness, and the end of a long, useful, and splendid career.

Mazarin, on his death-bed, had sent to the king a donation of all his effects, feeling that the greater part of them had been unjustly acquired, and belonged, in fact, to the monarch, whom he had plundered while he served. Colbert, on the contrary, sent to the king a schedule of all he possessed, with a regular account of how it had been acquired, showing that he left to his heirs not one livre except that which had been produced from the economical management of his own household, and the gifts which the king thought fit, from time to time, to bestow upon him. The two traits are perfectly characteristic of the two statesmen. Louis felt to the full the importance of the loss he was about to sustain, and the value of the man who was no longer destined to counterbalance the faults and weaknesses of the monarch by the wisdom and integrity of the minister; and, with the courteous kindness which was a beautiful part of Louis's nature, he went in person to smooth, as far as possible, the sick-bed of Colbert, by displaying the last public mark of his sovereign's approbation and regard. He proceeded to visit him in his own house; and set-

ting out from Versailles, accompanied by a splendid suite, he arrived at the hotel of the minister, and, getting out of his carriage in the street, forbade any one, either of the courtiers, guards, or attendants, to follow him into the house, for fear of disturbing Colbert, whilst suffering under an agonising disease. Thus, traversing the court alone and on foot, he mounted the staircase, and proceeded to the apartments of the dying minister; nor was he met by any one till he had nearly reached the door of his chamber, where he found the abbé Gallois, one of the most attached friends of Colbert. Louis seated himself by the bed of his faithful servant, and, pressing his hand in his, expressed the deep interest he felt in his situation; assumed hopes, which he could scarcely entertain, for his recovery; and besought him to use all means for restoring to the king so attached a friend, and to the people so beneficent a protector.

The only tear which the approach of death and the severing of all worldly ties is said to have called from the eyes of Colbert, was brought into them by the generous condescension of the monarch. But the hopes of Louis, real or assumed, were in vain. The disease of Colbert hourly became worse; and, after having fulfilled all the duties enjoined by the Roman catholic faith, to which he had always shown a strong but unostentatious attachment, he expired on the 6th of September, 1683, at the age of sixty-three.

He left several children by his wife, Marie de Charron, daughter of James Charron, seigneur de Menars, to whom he was married in 1651, while his fortunes were yet unmade; and to them he transmitted a property which was sufficient to maintain them in the station to which his talents and exertions had raised his family, but no more. A superb mausoleum was erected to his memory in the church of St. Eustace; and although, especially during his latter years, he had been unpopular in Paris, and more than once insulted by the people whom he strove

to benefit, no sooner was he dead than his reputation began to rise, and France felt and grieved over the loss she had sustained. The name of *great* was bestowed upon Louis XIV. during his life, and Colbert acquired the same title after his death. With the minister it has remained, but posterity has denied it to the king.

Nevertheless, it is but justice to Louis to acknowledge that, when his vanity did not interfere, he was eager to give the stamp of royal authority to every beneficial project of his great minister; and even when that vanity did interfere, and clothed itself under the disguise of national glory, he could still appreciate the schemes which he neglected to follow, and esteemed the man who opposed him. Such, however, is the utmost we can allow to Louis in his transactions with Colbert; for though it is certain that the statesman could not have carried forward, successfully, any of his magnificent undertakings without the wise co-operation of the king; still, while we grant to the monarch the honour of having supported the minister in many of his great endeavours, we cannot forget that he frustrated many likewise.

In person Colbert was tall and thin, and his countenance was peculiarly stern and severe: his eye, cold and calm in the midst of the angry passions by which he was surrounded, seemed to offer a tacit rebuke to the heat of others; and the habitual frown, which had gathered his brow into a deep wrinkle, was in itself a reply to all who solicited any thing without justice. Inflexible in his determinations, he was keen and cutting in his reply to those who sought to change them, and few persons ever applied to Colbert twice upon the same subject. Amelot de la Houssaye informs us, that this very sternness of character caused a pasquinade to be written after his death, and hung round the neck of his statue in the church of St. Eustace. Colbert is there represented kneeling, with his hands clasped in the attitude of prayer; and shortly after the erection of

the monument a card was found upon the breast of the statue, with the following inscription: —

"Res ridenda nimis, vir inexorabilis orat."

Notwithstanding this sternness of character, Colbert, in many instances, showed a kindly disposition; and, on all occasions, acknowledged in science, talent, and virtue, a claim upon his attention and liberality, although he himself was very deficient in many of the ordinary branches of information. Notwithstanding, also, his spirit of economy, he was, as we have seen, most generous where generosity could be productive of good to the individual, or of benefit to society: but the man who is the enemy of vice, prodigality, peculation, and hypocrisy, must always find a host to hate, and many to calumniate, him. Colbert's character is written in his actions, and we can say very little more than is said by the history of his life. Few men, indeed, ever rendered such different qualities serviceable to the world in general, by affixing to them the limit assigned by reason, and adhering to that boundary with steady perseverance. Few men ever marked the distinction so strongly between liberality and prodigality; between the reward of merit and the ostentatious patronage of pretension; between profound consideration for the wants, necessities, and happiness of the people, and timid or weak concession to unjust clamour.

The views of Colbert were, on all occasions, vast and comprehensive; yet he was not less distinguished by his knowledge of detail. His financial schemes and operations were upon the grandest scale that the world had ever seen; and yet his accounts were kept with such regularity, that the most minute transaction could be traced from its beginning to its close. At the commencement of every year, he furnished the king with a table of agenda, in which he requested the monarch to mark every operation as it was carried into execution; so that all the great branches of expense or revenue were continually beneath the eyes of Louis,

while Colbert held every thing prepared, at a moment's warning, to give the monarch all the details of any of those branches in regard to which a doubt or a question might arise. The minister thus deprived himself of the power, either of enriching himself at the expense of the state, as had been the case with Mazarin, or of squandering its wealth in profuse bounties to his personal friends and favourites, as had been the case with Fouquet: and thus he not only produced incalculable benefit at the time, but set an example of accuracy which has been more or less demanded from ministers of finance ever since.*

In the patronage of arts and sciences, Colbert certainly might follow his natural tastes; but yet there can be no doubt, that his great object was thereby to increase the general prosperity of the country. The productive arts, which to the mean and narrow-minded politicians of his and all other days have been the first and only consideration, might, as he felt, require encouragement, to afford food and clothing to the body; but he was not the less aware, that science and the elegant arts were the means of affording food and clothing to the mind: and he knew that the encouragement of the one class must necessarily give life and energy to the other.

Viewed in every point, the mind of Colbert, as a statesman, appears amongst the greatest which the Almighty ever sent forth to benefit large masses of his creatures; and yet, neither as a man nor as a statesman was he without his errors and his weaknesses. His persecution of the unfortunate Fouquet is the darkest spot in his character; for it rests upon his heart. But there are foibles recorded of him, which, though it is not pleasant to dwell upon small errors in great men, must not be totally passed over in silence. That vanity was not by any means one of his ruling failings, is clear from the

* Fouquet and the other superintendents of finance seldom took any account from the farmers-general, and never, I believe, entered into any detailed account to the monarch whom they served.

simplicity of his habits, and the unostentatious style of his life; from his never conferring favours except in the name of the king; and from his rejecting and discouraging all personal praise from the literary and scientific men of the time: and yet, in regard to antiquity of family, to which he had in reality small pretensions, he seems to have shown great anxiety, and some degree of weakness. He had the genealogy of his race traced, or compounded, with much care and expense; and we are told by Amelot de la Houssaye, that, during the time this difficult undertaking was in progress, an advocate of Rheims brought him an old tombstone, on which was inscribed in Gothic letters, "*Li preu chivalier Richard Kolbert occiz a la jor*—." The rest was illegible, but the part which had been preserved was sufficient to give Colbert extraordinary satisfaction: the advocate was rewarded by a present of 2000 crowns, and soon after was named counsellor in his provincial court. How much higher a title to honour his own actions afforded, than any of the actions of his ancestors, Colbert did not seem to comprehend; and yet the verses which Le Laboureur applied to him during his life, he must have felt to be just, and could not have received as unpleasant, although they admitted that his progenitors derived more glory from their descendant than they could cast on him.

"Mens generosa tibi pretioso lumine fulget,
Quæ meritis propriis amplificavit avos.
Nam si præfertur generis qui servat honorem,
Quanta majus laus est nobilitare genus!
A parvo incipiens existi semper in altum
Perque gradus omnes culmina celsa tenes."

It may be attributed to him, also, as a weakness, that long after his persecution of Fouquet had been terminated by the ruin of the superintendent, he still retained the same spirit of animosity towards him which had appeared in their rivalry; and it was his common custom, when any body, in discussing a matter of business, attempted to evade the question, to ask sharply, "Do you take me for an Angevin?"—alluding, it is supposed, to the facility with which Fouquet, whose

family was Angevin, or belonging to Anjou, suffered himself to be deceived by the farmers and financiers of that day. His complaisance for Louis XIV., also, in many cases where his own dignity required him to have opposed the king's inclinations, or, at least, to have taken no active part in giving them effect, may also be looked upon as a failing, though certainly one which was shared by all the nobles and ministers of the court. Thus, he might well have become the superintendent of the education of the king's illegitimate children, by the beautiful and unhappy La Vallière; but when he joined with the duke of Lauzun in persuading that amiable and unfortunate girl to return to her seducer, after her second retreat to the Carmelites, he did what might have been expected from every member of Louis's court, except Colbert.

The chief error which has been attributed to him, as a statesman, is his not having encouraged the commerce in wheat, by permitting its exportation to other countries. Those who have thus accused him do not seem to have taken into consideration, that it might not have been in his power so to do. During the very first year of his administration, the famine by which the land was afflicted, caused the parliament to issue a decree, not only forbidding the exportation of corn for the future, under the severest penalties, but even limiting its transfer from one province to another, except under peculiar circumstances. This famine, together with the proceedings of the parliament, and the clamour of various interested individuals, excited in the public mind such a degree of terror respecting the exportation of corn, that, for many years after the death of Colbert, the probability of scarcities was one of the epidemic apprehensions of the French people; and it has so unhappily occurred, that, by the combination of unwise regulations with inclement seasons, affecting a very varied soil, dearths of such magnitude and severity have taken place as to justify great care and circumspection in any arrangements calculated to facilitate the

exportation of the first necessary of life. Whether Colbert could ever have brought the people to consent to it at all without violent commotions, is a matter of very great uncertainty; and whether, by doing so, circumstanced as France was at that time, he would have conferred any real benefit upon the country, is scarcely less doubtful.

The charge against him, however, of having suffered to subsist a great many of those internal regulations, and local laws and privileges, which impeded the commerce of the country, and checked at a thousand points the circulation of money, is more relevant; for Colbert could undoubtedly have removed those obstacles, and, by rendering the transmission of money and goods perfectly free through France, would have greatly accelerated all the movements of commerce. The people of Languedoc and Guienne, of Britanny and Champagne, might have grumbled to see the abolition of those local custom-houses and tolls which shut them out from their fellow countrymen; but the general and permanent benefit would soon have far more than compensated for any local and temporary inconvenience.

Nevertheless, it were, perhaps, too much to expect from one man, in the space of twenty-two years, to correct every abuse, to ameliorate every institution, to reward every species of merit, to encourage every sort of industry, to improve every branch of art and science, and to carry to the highest pitch the prosperity of the country, the corporeal comforts of the many, and the intellectual pursuits of the few;—too much, assuredly, to demand of him, after having repaired the vessel of the state, which, when he took the helm in hand, was little better than a mere wreck, to guide her forward through hurricanes and tempests, rocks and shoals, with a steady hand, towards a favourable port, without leaving upon her deck some of the ruined fragments of the confusion and lumber which past-by storms had left behind. Colbert did all, perhaps, that man could do; far more than man ever did before him in the same circumstances,

—far more than we have ever seen performed since his time; and if he did commit a few errors, if he did leave some impediments in the way of that great improvement which he laboured through life to achieve, that eye must be very hard and insensible to the aspect of brightness, which can rest upon such small spots, amidst the blaze of glory that other actions cast around his name.

JOHN DE WITT, GRAND PENSIONARY OF HOLLAND.

BORN 1625, DIED 1672.

Republics are the nurseries of great virtues and of great crimes. Extreme forms of government almost always produce extreme evils and extreme benefits; and the republican form — the most natural, though not, perhaps, the most convenient — has always given scope to the display of great talents, and the exercise of eminent virtues, but has seldom failed to reward the exertion of the highest qualities with ignominy, disappointment, and death. Such was the case with Holland in her dealings with the famous pensionary, De Witt, one of the greatest statesmen that ever appeared in a nation whose wealth, arrogance, love of liberty, and territorial weakness has constantly required and brought forth men eminent for their political sagacity, for their stern integrity, and their patriotic devotion.

John de Witt was born at the town of Dort, in the year 1625, and was the son of Jacob de Witt, a burgomaster of that city and deputy to the states of Holland. At Dort, also, De Witt received his early education; and during the troublous times which terminated the contest between Spain and the United Provinces, when the patriotism of the house of Orange began to merge into ambition, and the defenders of their country's liberty began to tread upon the freedom of their fellow-countrymen, De Witt was nurtured up in the sturdy principles of the old Dutch republicans, and learned to consider the service of his country the first destination of a citizen's life, the assertion of her liberties the great duty of every freeman in the state. The father of John de Witt himself set his son the example of devoting the greater portion of his time

and attention to the service of his country; and he is said to have been employed in various important affairs by the states of his province, ere he was elected to the office of burgomaster. Though not the eldest son of the burgomaster, De Witt seems to have been educated, by his father, for the purpose of following his own steps, as one of the deputies to the states of Holland. But the natural tendency of the mind of the future statesman at first appeared to lead him to studies the most opposite that it is possible to conceive to the tangled, obscure, and unsatisfactory paths of politics and diplomacy. From his youth upwards to manhood, his great delight was in mathematical investigations. He did not, by any means, neglect classical knowledge, or the cultivation of a refined taste, as the various works which he has left behind sufficiently evince: but the pursuit of certainties, the investigation of real causes, the classification of facts, the inquiry into principles, and the deduction of rules from discovery, seemed to be the great object of his attention; and at the age of twenty-three he published a treatise entitled *Elementa Curvarum Linearum*, in which he showed the profound knowledge of mathematics he had then acquired, and which was equalled by few of his age.

About the same time he took his degree as doctor of laws; and shortly after was sent by his father to travel, with his elder brother, through different states, in order to acquire that knowledge which could not be gained within the walls of an university. He returned to witness his brother's marriage, which took place in 1650, and found that the fame which he had acquired while a student had been increased amongst his countrymen, and rendered more reverential, by a temporary absence from his native place. At the same time his father used every exertion to establish his two sons in such employments as might afford them opportunities of displaying their abilities. Cornelius was rapidly appointed burgomaster of Dort, bailiff of Byerland, and Ruard, or governor, of the county of Putten. John

de Witt was nominated, in the year of his return, pensionary of Dort, and in that situation his great talents for administration first strongly developed themselves.

About the time of his nomination to office took place the bold and dangerous attempt of William II., prince of Orange, stadtholder of the United Provinces, upon the liberties of the country. He arrested, of his own authority, the admiral of the fleet, just returned from the Brazils, who was a relation of the young statesman, and with the consent of the states general ordered the admiralty of Amsterdam to imprison several of the naval officers who had served with Cornellizon de Witt. The states of Holland, however, resisted; and the prince instantly caused the arrest of six deputies of Holland, of whom one was Jacob de Witt, the father of the future statesman.

The prisoners were carried to the castle of Louvestein: but their influence still existed without the walls; and their party, assuming the name of the Louvestein faction, only gained strength from an act which was intended to crush it. Indignation spread throughout the country; and on William's attempting to obtain possession of Amsterdam by stratagem, he found the citizens prepared to resist him; and his forces were obliged to retire from the gates with the disgrace of discovery and repulse. After various other turbulent efforts to obtain his purpose, and the negotiation of a discreditable treaty with France, William was forced to abandon his design, and set the prisoners at liberty. Not long afterwards, death cut short the ambitious course of the stadtholder, and freed the nation from the trammels of a power which they had conferred upon one man, for the preservation of their liberties, but which they now found might be used for their destruction. The warning which the conduct of William had given, was not lost upon the people of Holland, and was especially treasured up by De Witt. Bikker, the great opponent of the prince of Orange, who had wisely guarded his fellow-citizens

against the first steps of the ambitious stadtholder, engaged the great attention of the people; but, nevertheless, the young pensionary of Dort was by no means unheeded: and his influence was greatly increased by the steps which he advocated, and which were immediately taken, both for resuming the power which the states had given out of their own hands, and for guarding against any future violation of the original republican form of government.

De Witt, however, was soon destined to oppose some of the popular measures, and to fall, for a time, into disrepute. England, under the rod of Cromwell, having lost nothing of her military energies, even by the long course of the civil war, exacted, with rigid tyranny, those degrading concessions from other maritime nations, which her long acknowledged superiority on the ocean had established on a multitude of evil precedents. All flags appearing on the British seas were struck before the flag of England, and the Dutch suffered a peculiar hardship in a tax of what was called the tenth herring, which was laid by Great Britain upon their extensive fisheries. The vessels of Holland, however, had multiplied in the exertion of her commercial energies; her seamen, nurtured from infancy upon the bosom of the ocean, were inferior to none in the world; her officers had been habituated to strife and conquest through long years of warfare against an unsuccessful tyranny; and every thing in the state, both of England and the United Provinces, held out to the latter the fair hope of casting off those tokens of subjection which were still demanded by the haughty marine of England. The people were eager to try their strength against a country which they conceived to be enfeebled by internal dissensions, and the navies of Holland were anxious to spread their sails for what they conceived would be a certain victory.

De Witt saw farther, however: he perceived that how much so ever the agricultural and commercial prosperity might have suffered from the civil war, new energy had

been inspired into the people of England by the keen exertion of their strength, on both sides, and that a new and more vigorous spirit had been infused into the government, by the powerful mind of the mighty hypocrite who had conquered for himself the kingly power, without assuming the kingly title. He saw, also, that even were the success of Holland as undoubted as her people imagined, her energies would be diverted, by the alluring glories of a foreign war, from all those great objects which might be gained if the states and the people, united in a time of peace, bent all their efforts to consolidate and strengthen the republican form of government, to guard it against external and internal danger, and to identify the prosperity of the nation with the permanence of her free institutions. He knew, too, that the natural tendency of a state of warfare, and particularly of military success, is monarchical; that leaders deeply imbued with the republican spirit may make a voluntary resignation of the power which is intrusted to them for a time; but that to command generates a craving for authority, and that to obey begets a willingness to submission, which is very different from that acknowledgment, in act as well as word, which men in republics yield to the laws which they have had a share in enacting, and have an interest in preserving. He judged that the power, intrusted either to military or naval men, must be great to render it effectual; and he was well aware that that power, by the weakness even of the freest and most vigorous-minded people, might be turned against their own liberties, in the slumber which succeeds vast exertion, or the intoxication which follows great success. That such were his opinions, appears from the whole tenor of his maxims; but he at the same time points out, in the most distinct manner, the advantages which Holland might have gained from an alliance with England, and the opportunity which at this time existed of cementing that alliance in the strongest manner. In reasoning upon the causes of the depression of Holland towards

the middle of the seventeenth century, he says, "To the third clause, viz. the war against England, I may well say, and that truly, that we have suffered that for the sake of the house of Orange. For those of the parliament of England having cut off the head of their own good king, and being therefore exceedingly hated by all the monarchs in the world, and likely, in all human appearance, to be called to account and punished for it by neighbouring princes, lest, such a crime remaining unavenged, their own subjects might be thereby excited to act the same thing against them: they therefore found themselves under a necessity to seek the friendship of this state; and for that end, soon after the death of the prince of Orange, they sent a considerable embassy hither, without showing the like honour to any other potentate or state in the world.

"I shall not here particularise all that they offered to settle a friendship between both nations; it will be sufficient to observe, that they did, by commissioners, earnestly insist with the states general to renew that well-known treaty of intercourse made between both nations an. 1495. Though I am of opinion, and have before amply proved it, that it is wholly unadvisable for this state to enter into any farther league with England; yet, by renewing the said treaty, we should not only settle a friendship, but also at the same time have established our commerce and fishery; as to which the articles of the said treaty (especially in regard of the fishery) are expressed in the most desirable terms.* Yet those that conceived themselves bound as slaves to the house of Orange did not only oppose the concluding of the foresaid desirable treaty, but also sent away those ambassadors with all manner of reproach and dishonour: first, by opposing them in the public deliberations of the state, against the progress of the said treaty, especially by framing delays, alleging that we first ought to see the issue of the designs of the present king of Great Britain (then declared king in Scotland); and, on the other side, exciting the rabble

against the persons of the said ambassadors to such a degree, that the States of Holland perceived the aversion, and daily threats that were uttered against their persons, — were necessitated, for preventing of greater mischief, to appoint a *corps de garde* to be erected before their house, to secure them from the like mischief which befel Dr. Dorislaus, envoy from the said parliament, at the Swan Inn in the Hague.

"What aversion such proceedings might have caused in the said ambassadors, is easy to be apprehended, as it also followed; who have observed, after they had stayed here a considerable time, that the zeal of the honest and upright government, especially in the provinces of Holland and Zealand, was not able to balance the faction of Orange. They returned, in great discontent, to England. One of them, viz. Mr. St. John (upon taking his leave), told the states commissioners, — 'My lords, you have your eye upon the issue of the affairs of the king of Scotland, and therefore have despised the friendship we have proffered you: I will assure you, that many in the parliament were of opinion that we ought not to have come hither, or to have sent any ambassador till we had first overcome our difficulties, and seen an ambassador from you. I now see my fault, and perceive very well that those members of parliament judged right. You will, in a little time, see our affairs with the king of Scotland dispatched; and then you will, by your ambassadors, come and desire what we now so cordially come to proffer. But assure yourselves, you will then repent you have rejected our kindness.' Would to God that experience had not verified the aforesaid discourse to our great loss! for the king of Scotland's affairs being determined by a battle, and a war with this state following upon it, the wounds and losses occasioned by that war effectually brought to pass the repentance aforesaid. But, *fronte capillata, post est occasio calva:* it is in vain to shut the well's mouth when the calf is drowned.

"This is the true reason of that lamentable war; to

which may be added the intolerable humour of that nation, their continual jealousy of our flourishing traffic, and the innate hatred of Cromwell against the prince of Orange, as a sister's son of that king, whom, of all the world, he had most reason to dread. So that every one may easily imagine what pain and care it hath cost our honest rulers to regain a peace with that nation."

Besides all these considerations, he was, upon every principle of policy, an advocate of peace, as far more beneficial to Holland in almost all cases than war; and we have his own words for his views on this subject also, which are as remarkable as they are just. "On the other hand," he says, speaking of the efforts of Holland to balance the power of the other states of Europe,—"on the other hand, it appears to me a notable piece of folly that the merchants of Holland, the state itself being founded upon commerce, should neglect the strengthening of their own position, while they hold it as a constant maxim, that for fear of sharper wars hereafter we must interfere to balance the states of Europe. When we have rendered our cities impregnable, and have guarded our frontiers by every means in our power, we may, for our own interest, say to all nations, 'Give peace in our days, O Lord!' Should even the worst happen, while remaining in tranquillity, we may so increase our resources and strengthen our forces, both by land and sea, that no other power will venture to attack us; but rather choose for the object of aggression some weaker state." Again, in another place, while inquiring whether Holland should ever make war to free itself from commercial restrictions, imposed by other nations, he uses the following terms:—"I do say, that we ought never to undertake a war, on account of any foreign imposition or toll upon goods, for the remedy will always be worse for Holland than the disease. It seems to me, also, that such impositions would be much more conveniently removed by charging the commodities of other nations as much here as they charge

our wares, merchants, and ships in their own country. In such cases we generally find that either the high duties act as prohibitions, or that the trade in these high charged commodities thrives as well as before. For, if by such duties the commodities burdened are prevented from being imported, those that laid on the duties find them a loss instead of gain, and therefore immediately remove them."

He goes on to argue, that although it was the interest of the States to carry on the war with Spain, till that country had abandoned all claim upon Holland, yet were they placed in a very different relative position with regard to any other power; observing, with an apparent reference to England, "that if Holland, for fear of a war, begin a war, she acts like a man who, to get out of the smoke, leaped into the fire." And he goes on to notice the maxim which was commonly used in the commencement of the struggle with Spain, *Pace dubia bellum potius;* remarking that it only applied to their warfare against internal tyrants. And he adds, "But now, thank God, the states of Holland, in a time of external peace, wield all the strength of the country, and are able to govern it better than in time of war, uncontrolled by any opposing power. So that the contrary maxim holds good in Holland, *Bellum pace dubia pejus et malorum omnium pessimum.* Except, indeed, the intolerable slavery of being governed by the will of a single person, no evil is greater than a war; for if it be the worst thing that can befall a nation, then an uncertain peace is only bad because a war is likely to ensue. Some men may ask, seeing that peace is so necessary to Holland, whether, from a strong desire of rendering the peace we seek certain and permanent, we ought not, when once engaged in war, to continue, without relaxation, till we have compelled our enemy to consent to a firm and lasting peace. To this I answer, that if we think of the uncertainty of this world, and remember that by our commerce and navigation we are brought constantly in

contact with other nations, we may lay it down as an undoubted fact, that a permanent peace in relation to Holland is a mere chimera. * * * * It is, therefore, a certain truth," he goes on, " and will ever remain so, that, next to the freedom of the government and inhabitants at home, nothing is more necessary to us than peace with all men. And that next to that, it is necessary in such time of peace to fortify our frontiers, to keep up our maritime power, to economise our resources, and to take off, as soon as possible, all burdensome imposts; holding ourselves assured, that unless by these means we labour to render permanent the peace that we desire, and to preserve our country in as high a state of prosperity as circumstances will admit, all our other efforts will be only prejudicial to Holland. Farther, that we, on the contrary, relying on these maxims and means, ought always to wait till others commence actual hostilities against us, inasmuch as by the continual state of preparation in which we shall be found, other nations will soon learn that there is more to be gained by fair commerce in a time of peace than by war, and the mutual destruction of trade."

The reasonings of De Witt, however, were not successful; the great body of the people of Holland were opposed to his views; and various outrages were offered to the British ambassador at the Hague, excited, it is supposed, by the partisans of the house of Stuart, who now swarmed in the Low Countries. England, on her part, was not behind hand in adopting rigorous measures towards her maritime rival. But the means which she took to evince her animosity towards the Dutch was of a very different kind from that which the populace of Holland pursued. In the one country, national hatred showed itself alone in the tumultuous insolence of a few of the lower classes; but in England, the famous Navigation Act was passed, striking a severe blow at the vital interests of Holland. As may easily be supposed, with the people of both countries thus disposed,

one act of aggression and injury followed another, till at length a wild and chimerical scheme, suggested, it is supposed, by Cromwell, was proposed to the Dutch, although there can be little doubt that both the parliament and the usurper were very well aware that it could never be adopted. They suggested to the States-General an union of the two countries into one commonwealth, with a community of rights, privileges, and laws.

This was, of course, not listened to for a moment by the more sober-minded Dutchmen; but, in the meantime, a variety of minor acts took place, hurrying on the catastrophe. Boats were sunk, ships were seized, reprisals were made, and at length, in May, 1652, the Dutch fleet put to sea under the command of the celebrated Van Tromp. The ships of Holland, forty-two in number, were encountered in the Downs by the English fleet under Blake, who immediately fired a gun across the bows of the Dutch admiral as a signal to lower his flag, in acknowledgment of the naval supremacy of England. It would seem, as far as we can judge from rival statements, that this not being done as speedily as the English admiral thought necessary, another and another shot was fired; and that Van Tromp, perhaps losing patience, perhaps seeing no use of delaying the commencement of an inevitable struggle any longer, fired a broadside into Blake's ship, and an action began, which lasted till night. The English vessels were fewer in number than the Dutch, but were of much greater size and heavier weight of metal. The advantage was decidedly on the part of England; for though the numbers killed were very nearly equal, yet one Dutch ship was sunk, and another remained in the hands of the enemy when darkness parted the combatants.

The news of the fatal blow being struck, and still more, the bad success of their fleet, filled the States-General with consternation. The councils of De Witt were listened to, and an embassy was immediately

sent to London, in order, if possible, to avert those consequences which they at first began to dread when they became inevitable. The attempt, however, was in vain. The parliament would hear of no reasonable terms of compromise; and, while the short and unsuccessful negotiation was going on, each country hastened its preparations in order to assert it rights or pretensions on the sea. On the one hand, Van Tromp set sail from his own shores, with a fleet of a hundred ships; while Blake and Ayscough left the ports of England, and sought to meet their enemies in the narrow seas. For some time, however, the severity of the weather and various accidental circumstances, prevented their meeting, though the famous De Ruyter encountered Ayscough, and an engagement took place between them, which ended by both parties claiming the victory. Shortly after, also, the admiral De Witt met with Blake upon the Kentish coast, and the Dutch fleet again suffered a defeat. The people of Holland, who had anticipated more rapid success, began to be dispirited; but a victory obtained in the Mediterranean, by their admiral, Van Gallen, once more raised their expectations, though that gallant officer himself fell in the conflict. On the 29th of November, in the same year, however, took place the greatest victory that the Dutch had ever yet obtained at sea. Van Tromp and De Ruyter, with a fleet numerically superior, but still inferior in size to that of England, encountered Blake in the Downs, and totally defeated him. Van Tromp took six of the English ships, drove the rest into the mouth of the Thames, and then, placing a broom at his mast head, sailed through the channel, declaring that he would sweep it of the enemy.

This boast, however, was soon rendered ridiculous. Vast efforts were made in England to repair the defeat of Blake. A numerous fleet was immediately equipped, and put under the command of that officer; and the naval and military services being at that time confounded, the famous general Monk was

joined in command with the two admirals Dean and Blake. They were not long ere they encountered Van Tromp and De Ruyter, with a fleet nearly equal in point of ships of war, but embarrassed with the convoy of 300 merchantmen. The action was maintained with great spirit during three days, Tromp and De Ruyter manœuvring in every manner to guard the convoy; and though defeated, they succeeded in saving all but twenty-four vessels of the large merchant fleet under their charge. Ten ships of war, however, were lost upon the part of Holland; but Tromp and De Ruyter acquired as much honour by this unsuccessful engagement as Blake and Monk by their success.

Holland, however, had now tasted sufficiently of the evils of a naval war: their commerce was impeded in every direction, and, whether victorious or defeated, they were still considerable losers. A prospect, indeed, was offered to the States about this time of carrying on the war in a manner which might have been more detrimental to Cromwell, and which was calculated to obtain the support of all those whose passions were roused to resist the claims of England. Charles II., then in exile at Paris, induced Boreel, the Dutch ambassador at the court of France, to forward a letter from him to the States-General, informing them that he had good reason to believe a number of officers in the English fleet were either disgusted with Cromwell or personally attached to himself. In this statement there can be no doubt he was justified; but he went on to express a belief that a number of these officers might be induced to abandon the service in which they were engaged, and come over to him, as their legitimate monarch, bringing their ships to swell any fleet in which he might appear. To put this to the proof, he offered to serve as a volunteer in the Dutch navy under Van Tromp; and the proposal was so specious, the probability of changing the tide of events in favour of Holland so seducing, that a great number of the

deputies to the States-General were prepared to embrace the proffered aid of Charles at once.

Charles, however, was opposed by one who, having from the first perceived the impolicy of a war with England, was determined to do all in his power to bring it to a conclusion. De Witt had by this time taken his seat in the States, in virtue of an office, his appointment to which we shall notice hereafter; and in a vigorous speech he argued against the acceptance of the offer of the exiled king, and completely turned the current of public feeling. He boldly stated a motive for rejecting it, which to him was conclusive, namely, that the near connection between Charles and the house of Orange would render his presence on board their fleet dangerous to the freedom of the States; and he went on to point out that if the proposal was accepted, and the service rendered, the United Provinces would be bound by every tie of honour and gratitude never to abandon the cause of the exiled king till they had seated him on the throne of his ancestors; so that the war between England and Holland would be necessarily protracted through an indefinite period of years, and the Dutch republic would be committed to the destruction of another government, which in principle approached very nearly to their own. This reasoning proved convincing to the great body of the deputies; and while De Witt pronounced a high panegyric upon the courage and generosity of Charles, he induced the States to decline the offer of the king, and to turn their attention to the attainment of tranquillity upon honourable terms, or the prosecution of the war with vigour and activity.

Negotiations were recommenced with England, for the purpose of obtaining peace, and Cromwell showed himself not averse to entertain the proposal. The proceedings, however, were long; and in the meanwhile a new victory, obtained by general Monk, in which twenty Dutch vessels were lost, and the rest driven back into the harbours of Holland, induced the States to offer still greater sacrifices than they

had at first proposed, for the benefit of that peace which they had so lately despised. But before the treaty could be concluded, Van Tromp resolved to strike one more blow; and issuing forth again from the ports of Holland, he encountered general Monk and the English fleet off Scheveling. It would seem that both Monk and his adversary had determined never to re-enter the ports of their country without victory. The different vessels engaged, each captain animated against the other by the memory of frequent struggles and varied successes, and the most severe and decisive action of the whole war took place. In the end, however, the Dutch were entirely defeated. Thirty of their vessels were either taken or sunk; and Van Tromp himself fell in the action, shot through the heart by a musket ball.

This decided success on the part of England raised the expectations of Cromwell, who once more revived his proposal of uniting the two commonwealths; but the idea again met with strenuous opposition, as might well be expected, from the States, and probably was put forward merely in order to raise the terms of accommodation to be demanded by England. But Cromwell was now met by a negotiator as firm, as stern, and as determined as himself; one who had ever opposed the war against England, but who was nevertheless prepared to support the rights of his own country, and what he conceived its best interests, with all the powers of a vigorous and inflexible mind. The opposition which he had shown to the first hostile measures of Holland, his prediction of consequences which had invariably taken place, his exposition of the general and comprehensive views which he entertained in regard to the policy of his native land, had all raised De Witt so high in the estimation of his fellow-countrymen, that before the termination of the war he had been unanimously elected grand pensionary of Holland. In the first instance, this office was only conferred upon him provisionally, with the view of disentangling the country from the perilous situation into which the rash and ill-advised

war with England had hurried it. The ability, however, with which he executed its functions, and the power which it placed in his hands, combined to obtain for him the absolute nomination to that high office.

This took place in 1653, while De Witt was in his twenty-eighth year; and personal ambition might, perhaps, have something to do with his acceptance of an office which was by no means without its perils and inconveniences. So great, indeed, were the dangers attending it, so thoroughly convinced were many of De Witt's best friends of the transitory nature of popularity, and the bitter penalty which was always paid by those who fix their power upon the sandy basis of a people's applause, that they remonstrated strongly with De Witt when they saw him prepared to accept the disastrous office, and represented to him how Barneveldt had ruled and laboured for the benefit of his country; how he had sacrificed the repose of a long life to preserve the rights and liberties of the people of Holland; and how, at the very moment when he was struggling for her dearest interests, the sword of a public executioner had been called to reward his patriotism, and terminate that life which had been devoted to the service of his country. De Witt was well aware of all these facts; but he replied, that every station of human life was subject to its own peril and trouble. He added, that he conceived the service of his native land to be the first duty of a good citizen, and that he would not shrink from the task, let its consequence be what it might. Once placed in office, the government of the whole state was moved and influenced by De Witt. He met with considerable opposition, it is true, from the favourers of the house of Orange; and after the failure of Charles II.'s proposal, an attempt was even made to appoint the young prince of Orange himself high admiral of Holland; in fact, supplying the place of Van Tromp with a child of three years old. This proposition was immediately negatived, however; and to prevent any similar intrigues, De Witt determined to fill the post

of Van Tromp by some officer of noble birth and distinguished character, though few were to be found in the Provinces possessing the advantages of rank and great naval experience.

With the usual sagacity which he displayed in his judgment of his fellow-men, De Witt fixed his eyes upon the baron Van Opdam, and prevailed upon him, though not without considerable difficulty, to undertake the responsible station of admiral. His choice was fully justified by the results, although no farther hostilities of any importance took place, after the defeat and death of Van Tromp, in the course of the first English war. The negotiations continued between Holland and England, and were carried on almost entirely by the protector and the grand pensionary. Cromwell found that he had to deal with a mind not inferior to his own in any respect, and superior in many; and after protracted negotiations, a treaty of peace was ratified between Holland and England on the 5th of April, 1654. The principal articles of which were indemnity for vessels seized, for the massacre at Amboyna, and for various other detrimental acts said to have been exercised by the Dutch towards the English; the striking of the national flag to British vessels, in token of the naval supremacy of England; and the surrender of the island of Polerone in the East Indies.

To this treaty was added a secret article, by which the states of Holland covenanted with the English protector never to confer upon the young prince of Orange, or any of his family, the dignity of stadtholder. This latter article has very generally been supposed to have been suggested to Cromwell by the ambition of De Witt; and there can be very little doubt, that it was one of those conditions to which the grand pensionary acceded with the greatest willingness. Human nature is found to be weak enough, even in the greatest men, to induce us to admit that it is very probable ambition had its share in the proceeding; nevertheless, it is by no means a necessary consequence that such should be the case, for the whole of De Witt's policy had a similar

tendency, namely, to exclude every one from so great a share of authority as to be dangerous to that republican form of government which he considered the most beneficial for the country. That such is the case is clearly proved by a singular passage in his own book of political maxims, to the following effect.*

"But here it may be said that things are much altered within these hundred years last; for Holland then subsisted mostly by agriculture, and then there were no soldiery, treasure, or fortified places to be at the earl's disposal. But when he had wars, it was with the help of his homagers and tenants, only subsidies of money being given him at his request by the states of the country. And, moreover, the cities of Holland and the castles of the nobility were (according to the then method of war) so strong that they could not be taken by the said earls, without great forces employed against them; so that the States of Holland, in their assemblies, have boldly contended for their rights against the earls' encroachments. Therefore these earls, on the other side, by reason of their great dignity, had many adherents that depended on them, which must needs make that government by earls every way unsteady, weak, and tumultuous.

"To this an approver of monarchical government may further add, that Holland now wholy subsists by traffic, and that one supreme head, captain-general or stadtholder, would have his own life-guards at the Hague, the place of assembly, and likewise the assistance of a great and well paid army, and of all the preachers, and by them, the love of the whole populace; and that at his pleasure he may dispose of all the impregnable frontier towns of those provinces that have no suffrages or voices in the state, though he should not increase his strength by any foreign alliances, or by collusion or flattery with the deputies of the other provinces of the generality, insomuch that the States of Holland would

* I use the old translation of 1702, where this passage will be found from page 10 to page 14.

not dare, no not in their assemblies, to open their mouths against the interest of such a supreme head; or, if they did, he would order his soldiers to take them by the collar, and might easily overpower most of the cities of Holland, the people being unaccustomed to arms, and, moreover, divided—fortifications but slight and mean in comparison of the present way of fortifying; so that one may truly say that the Hollanders, by setting up one supreme head over themselves, may now with ease, and without tumult, be governed like sheep by an irresistible sovereign, against whom they durst not speak one word when he should think fit to shear, flay, or devour them.

"Now what there is in this, and whether the Hollanders would be happy in such a condition, I shall at large hereafter give you my judgment.

"But as to the stupidity of the Hollanders, whether that be so great as that they have not wit enough to form a free commonwealth, and, having found that precious jewel of freedom, would, with Æsop's cocks, prefer a grain of corn before it. This is what hath not been judged so hitherto, but on the contrary, which, that it may be evident to the reader, he may be pleased to observe the prudent conduct of the States of Holland, at their great assembly in the years 1650 and 1651, as also seriously to ponder and weigh the manifold reasons and examples produced to this end in their Deduction of the year 1654. All this is yet further confirmed by that magnanimous resolution of the 23d of January, 1657, wherein the States of Holland unanimously declared, after consulting the general assemblies, or common halls of the respective cities in the province, to hold for a fundamental and certain maxim,—'That to place a perpetual head, chieftain, or general over the army is not only needless, but likewise exceeding prejudicial; and that accordingly in this province all things shall be thus directed, that whenever in a time of war and pressing necessity the States of Holland, with the other provinces, shall think fit to proceed to elect a

general for the army, or that upon any other occasion a captain-general should be chosen, then not to choose such a chieftain as shall have a perpetual commission, but for such an expedition, campaign, or occasion only as may happen,' &c. And, moreover, you may there see that these and other vigorous resolutions of the like nature were taken with this especial proviso, 'That the said resolution shall not be dispensed with, but by the unanimous consent of all the members of the said assembly.'

"By this you may perceive that the supposition of the Hollanders being phlegmatic and dull, and of a slavish nature, is altogether groundless; for seeing that they came not free, but by the death of the last stadtholder and captain-general, and that it was unseasonable and imprudent before that time for them to show their commendable zeal for their freedom and their skill in point of government; and seeing it is evident that a generation of men that are in freedom must be overcome before we can pass a right judgment thereof, and stop the mouths of opposers, — we, must, therefore leave it to God and time; and if such as like monarchical government, and those base and slavish opposers of liberty, survive those times, they will then be able to discern which of the two governments is founded on best reason.

"It shall not satisfy me to have said thus much in general; for seeing the States of Holland in their Deduction, chap. vi. art. 29., declare that they will not lose their freedom but with their lives, I shall therefore presume to give my opinion of the political maxims of Holland, hoping that my sincere zeal and uprightness to express the same for the benefit of the public will be so acceptable to our lawful rulers, that though I may have failed in some things, and by stating the true interests of my country have been necessitated to reflect on persons who seek their advantage to the prejudice of Holland, as it is now governed, the said rulers and true lovers of their native country will so favour this work and its

author against the said malevolent persons, that it shall never repent him to have been the first generous and bold undertaker of so commendable a work. But howsoever things happen or times oppose it, *recte fecisse merces est, et ipsa sui pretium virtus* (*i. e.* to do good is a reward of itself, and virtue carries its own recompence along with it). I shall then, having done my duty as an honest man, good citizen, and upright Christian that may not bury his talent, be able to take comfort in my sincere endeavours; and posterity, into whose hands these writings may fall, will, in spite of all the present powers that oppose it, be able to judge impartially, and that with a sound judgment; because by that time they will have learned, by joyful or sad experience, whether Holland's interest can be settled upon any other foundation or maxims than those herein expressed, and whether these reasons of mine will not be confirmed by the experience of following ages."

For these objects he laboured through his whole life; and never do we find that he lost any opportunity of casting obstacles in the way of all individuals who might by any chance endeavour to assume supreme power in a country, which he judged peculiarly to require a republican form of government. The office of grand pensionary, which he himself enjoyed, by no means gave such authority as to be dangerous to the state; and in cases where it afforded any very vast command, that command was more derived from the individual character of the person, his talents, his firmness, his courage, his disinterestedness, placed in a prominent point of view by the occupation of a responsible station, than by any extensive power implied by the office itself. The grand pensionary of Holland was originally but a servant of the Provinces, and was at first termed their advocate: in this light he was long regarded; and his proper place in the assembly of the States is said to have been below all the other deputies. Custom, however, had attributed to him very nearly the functions of a president; and it was his duty to pro-

pound all matters for consideration, to gather the opinions, and to digest the resolutions. But over these resolutions themselves he had in some degree a restrictive power, being permitted not to conclude any thing of great importance if he judged it likely to prove detrimental to the state. The office, properly speaking, was conferred but for five years; but in general the term was renewed, so that it was looked upon, except in cases of gross dereliction of duty, as permanent.

Notwithstanding the care which the grand pensionary had taken to render the article which excluded the house of Orange from the stadtholderate secret, and notwithstanding the power which he possessed, not only from his high office but from the fresh influence of his popularity, all the particulars of the treaty were soon made known, and a strong and active party was formed against him. The partisans of the house of Orange caballed in every province and in every town; the retainers of the exiled House of Stuart, who at that time swarmed in the Low Countries, abused De Witt for his concessions to the English usurper; and, safe in the impunity of compassion, attacked him openly with their tongues, with all the swaggering insolence of the cavalier faction. Even the clergy in many instances forgot the moderation of their sacred calling to assail the object of party hatred, and made their pulpits resound with denunciations against De Witt and the treaty with England. Nor were they without specious pretexts to assign for their animosity, — pretexts which were in the highest degree calculated to inflame the passions of that great mass of people which in all nations is moved by impulses, often honourable, often just, but always hasty, headlong, and unreasoning. The degradation of striking the Dutch flag to that of England, the indignity of being forced to exclude from the government of their country a family which had rendered such great services to the state, were placed by the malecontents in the most forcible point of view, and roused every one whose views of national interests were narrowed to the bounds of mere

national pride to oppose and impede all the proceedings of the grand pensionary. At the same time another very numerous class, who see nothing before them but any immediate expense, without having the mental power of counterbalancing the consideration of small loss by the certainty of immense advantage, raised their voices against the indemnity that was to be paid to England, and would fain have persuaded the States that this concession was infinitely worse than a protraction of the war, although six months of hostilities cost them in actual outlay more than the obnoxious indemnity, besides the destruction of their commerce, and the probable losses they might sustain by defeat.

The firmness and eloquence of De Witt, and the justness of his views, triumphed, however, over all opposition: the secret article of the treaty was sanctioned by a solemn act of the States-General; and although he had still difficulties to contend with, and met with very great opposition, even in the States themselves, he persevered, with resolute wisdom, in the course which he had laid down for himself. Nevertheless, not all his energy, not all his activity, not all his foresight, could prevent the evils ever attendant upon a divided nation; and it is probable that he felt most bitterly some of the inconveniences of that very form of government to which he was so strongly attached. If the disease of a monarchy is tyranny, the diseases of a republic are anarchy, confusion, and tumult; and with such was Holland afflicted for several years after the conclusion of the peace with England. Revolts took place in various parts of the United Provinces; discontent was general throughout the States; De Witt was assailed, both by the tongue and the pen; and the very frame of government in Holland was shaken. However calm and phlegmatic might be his temperament, however firm and resolute his spirit, it was impossible that such a state of things should not have a severe effect upon the mind of the grand pensionary; and he himself states, that about ten years before he concluded the composition of his Maxims

for the Government of Holland (which is generally attributed to about six years before his death) the affliction which he suffered, and the anxiety of his mind, produced a degree of melancholy which seemed likely fatally to affect his health.

In order to disentangle the country from the state of confusion in which it was involved, and to free himself also from the difficulties under which he laboured, and the melancholy which oppressed him, De Witt gave willing ear to an application for assistance, made by an ancient ally of the republic, who now claimed the exertion of their maritime power in a matter wherein they were only less interested than himself. The command of the Sound had always been an object of contest between the kings of Denmark and Sweden, and for many years those two northern countries had seldom been for many months at peace. It had generally been considered necessary, however, to the interests of Holland, that the command of the Sound should be in the hands of Denmark, and on most occasions she had exerted all her influence to secure it for her ally. The victories of Charles Gustavus, the successor of Christina, however, not only threatened the Dane's possession of the Sound, but even threatened the existence of Denmark itself, as a separate monarchy. After several defeats, the king of Denmark had been induced to sign a treaty of peace with Charles of Sweden, by which treaty he gave up to the victor a number of important provinces, and a free passage of the Sound.

This peace was concluded in the beginning of 1658; but before many weeks had passed, Charles, not contented with what he had obtained, and pretending to be suspicious of some negotiations which the Danes were carrying on with other nations, broke the treaty he had so lately sworn to observe, and turning his arms against Copenhagen itself, laid siege to the capital of his enemy's kingdom. The king of Denmark, shut up in his metropolis, defended himself gallantly against all the efforts of the Swede; the garrison and

the inhabitants, by numerous sallies, drove back the besieging forces, and retarded their operations; but still the enemy pressed close and more close upon the city, and the admiral Wrangel, with the Swedish fleet, occupied the Sound, and kept the port of Copenhagen in a state of complete blockade. Notwithstanding all the resolution of the king and the inhabitants, Copenhagen must soon have fallen, had not De Witt, with wise policy, engaged the states of Holland to determine upon supporting vigorously their ancient ally. By his exertions and endeavours, a fleet was equipped in an extraordinarily short space of time, and the famous admiral Opdam set sail with a favourable wind for the Baltic.

On reaching the Sound, he found a force prepared to oppose him, which to many might have seemed invincible. Wrangel, with a superior fleet, occupied the narrow channel; while the two castles, Cronenberg and Elsenberg, both now in possession of the Swedes, were prepared to support them in defence of the Sound. Opdam, though suffering severely from the gout, caused himself to be carried upon deck, and instantly advanced to force the passage. A tremendous engagement then began, Wrangel fighting with determined valour, and manœuvring with considerable skill, while the two fortresses poured a destructive fire into the Dutch fleet as it came up. The battle was to decide the fate of Copenhagen and of Denmark; and Charles Gustavus viewed it from the walls of Cronenberg, while the Danish monarch watched the progress of the fight from the towers of his beleagured capital. After a bloody engagement, however, of several hours, the king of Denmark saw the Swedish fleet give way; and Opdam, sailing on through the midst, anchored under the walls of Copenhagen, and poured abundant supplies into the city. This victory, however, was bought at a heavy price; an immense number of the Dutch seamen were killed, and the second and third Dutch admirals were amongst the slain.

Charles Gustavus showed an inclination, notwithstanding this signal defeat, to protract the war, and maintain

possession of the island of Fuhnen. But while the Danish and Dutch forces proceeded with success through a lengthened campaign against the Swedes, De Witt took measures to compel the king of Sweden to listen to reasonable terms of peace; and under his direction, the famous treaty was entered into called the Concert of the Hague, by which Charles saw such a formidable coalition arrayed against his ambitious views, that he was obliged to listen to terms far more favourable to Denmark than those which he had so lately broken. Ere the treaty was concluded, however, death cut the king of Sweden short in his ambitious projects, and the peace received the signature of his successor; though it is probable that, had he lived, many circumstances might have occurred to suspend its ratification.

Natural causes, which it is not necessary to investigate here, produce at various epochs an analogy between the circumstances of different nations, and what would appear, to a fanciful eye, a sympathetic connection between the events by which the situations of different states are affected at the same time. Thus towards the year 1660, throughout the whole of Europe, which for a long period of time had been afflicted with a constant succession of hostilities, there seemed to be a strong and general tendency towards the re-establishment of permanent peace, though the various wars that were actually going on in different parts of Europe had their rise in circumstances which had no connection whatever the one with the other. At very nearly the same period, the war between Sweden, Denmark, and Holland was brought to a conclusion; the long series of hostilities between France and Spain was terminated; and the restoration of Charles II. promised to give peace to the internal dissensions of England. Such a change, of course, affected the whole policy of Europe, altered the relations of every different state towards its neighbour, and in Holland especially produced a new aspect in public affairs which was highly favourable to the popularity and power of John de Witt.

From a state of tumult and turbulence, which threatened to overturn the Dutch government, every thing subsided into quiet and tranquillity; De Witt and his brother were applauded to the skies by the very people who had assailed them with abuse; the party of the house of Orange was silent, either from prudence or conviction; and the States-General remained almost entirely under the direction of the grand pensionary. The second term of his official duty expired in 1663; and the degree of popularity he had acquired was evinced by his unanimous re-election on the 15th of September, in that year.

During the three last years, however, a variety of acts, not very important in a historical point of view, but necessary to be noticed in the biography of De Witt, had been performed by the grand pensionary, who took some part in almost all the great events which were enacting around him. On the restoration of Charles II. to the throne of England, that monarch, as is well known, passed by the Hague, on his way to take possession of his recovered kingdom: on this occasion he was officially complimented by De Witt, in a speech of great power and eloquence, and was splendidly entertained by the pensionary, whose simple habits of life were all laid aside when it was necessary to represent with magnificence the state of which he was the principal minister. Charles, whose hypocrisy was generally of a good-humoured kind, though the exclusion of the house of Orange still undoubtedly rancoured at his heart, affected much gratitude and favour to De Witt, and appears, by his captivating manners, to have gained considerably even in the clear-sighted eyes of the grand pensionary.

Whether the effect produced upon De Witt was sufficiently great and sufficiently permanent — and royal smiles have often been found not without their effect even upon stern republicans — to induce him to commit an act unworthy of himself, or whether the interests of Holland, which have always had a very

potent influence upon all true Dutchmen, led the pensionary to a disgraceful submission to some of the demands of Charles, would be difficult to determine; but certain it is that the pensionary was persuaded to sanction a proceeding which all must regret, as casting a stain upon a high and illustrious name. After the return of the king to England, three of the miserable regicides who had stained the annals of their country with a shameful deed of blood, named Corbet, Okey, and Barkstead, had taken refuge in Holland to avoid the avenging sword which pursued their fellows. Though guilty undoubtedly of murder, aggravated by a mockery of justice, yet the wild enthusiasms under which they acted, the excited state of public feeling at the time they committed their crime, and the scenes of political anarchy in the midst of which it was perpetrated, all gave a peculiar aspect to their situation; and Holland had also to remember that she had in some degree recognised their innocence, by treating on terms of amity and alliance with their very principal and leader in the act for which they were now pursued by Charles. To have interceded for the other regicides was not indeed required at her hands; but to give a safe asylum to those who cast themselves upon her hospitality and honour was requisite to the maintenance of her character as a free, just state. Charles II., however, by his minister at the Hague, sir George Downing, demanded of the States the arrest of Corbet, Okey, and Barkstead. They were accordingly seized, transmitted to England, and executed on the 19th of April, 1662; and the share which De Witt had in this evil transaction is proved by a speech of Charles himself to some Dutch ambassadors, in which he thanked the States pointedly for the arrest of his father's murderers; and added, "I must also, on this occasion, inform your excellencies that I have a very particular account of the share which monsieur De Witt had in this affair, with which I am extremely well satisfied,

and shall always preserve a grateful remembrance of it; and with this I desire you to acquaint him."

Advantages certainly accrued to Holland from the friendship of Charles, and the purpose of engaging the interest of England for the States might be one object of De Witt in his present concessions. Through the mediation of the English monarch, Portugal, then a great commercial nation, concluded a treaty with the States, highly advantageous to them; and as the whole negotiation passed through the hands of De Witt, it is very probable that either gratitude for past assistance, or the expectation of future advantages, might influence him in yielding much to the demands of the restored king of England. A still greater concession was made to Charles about the same time, by the nullification of the secret article which had been inserted in the former treaty with England, by which the family of Orange were by name excluded from the stadtholderate; and in March, 1663, a new treaty of alliance was signed between England and the United Provinces.

Perceiving clearly, however, that the feelings of hostility which had been engendered by the late angry contests between the two countries had by no means subsided, and that Charles II. himself was one of those characters which no principles of gratitude, virtue, or honour, can bind, De Witt evidently regarded the amity of England as founded upon a very uncertain basis, and took every means in his power to cement and enlarge the Dutch relations with France. Situated as Holland was, between two nations more powerful than herself, it was always necessary for her to rely in some degree upon the one or the other; and for the time the menacing aspect of England rendered France her natural support, while the interposition of the Spanish Netherlands secured the weaker power against any of the lion-like propensities of its stronger ally. To Louis XIV. also, whose navy was at this time in the most extraordinary state of dilapidation, the alliance of the Dutch was a matter of some importance; for, while his military pro-

jects were still slumbering in the uncertain indecision of youth, the marine of the United Provinces, while bound by treaty to the sovereign of France, gave him always the means of checking any adversary that might rise up, without exerting all the dormant vigour of his own exhausted land. The interests of the two countries were thus united; and Louis not only willingly entered into the views of De Witt, but prepared with greater sincerity than monarchs usually show to fulfil not only the letter but the spirit of his engagement.

Between England and Holland at that time there existed numerous most fertile causes of discord; claims upon various distant territories; colonies rivalling and disputing with each other; commerce carried on by the same means and through the same channels; maritime, colonial, and commercial jealousy: all afforded a thousand irritating circumstances, which — ere the year was out wherein the last treaty of peace we have mentioned was signed — produced various acts of absolute hostility between England and the United Provinces. War, it is true, was not declared for some months after; but attempts were made by either party upon the West Indian and East Indian possessions of the other; and De Ruyter on the part of Holland, with Holmes and Lawson on the part of England, kept the seas, and strove to obtain as much as possible by attacking the colonies of the adverse country, ere a state of hostility was formally announced. De Witt laboured with all the powers of his great mind to turn aside the coming tempest, but in vain; the English government declined the mediation of the king of France; and the duke of York, afterwards James II., put to sea with a large fleet for the purpose of attacking the commercial navy of the Dutch. In this he was successful to such a degree, capturing a fleet of upwards of 100 Dutch merchantmen, that the British parliament entered upon the war with sanguine expectations of complete triumph, and in March of 1665 voted two millions and a half, for the purpose of carrying on the approaching hostilities with vigour.

The successes of De Ruyter, however, in his attacks upon Guinea and the Cape de Verd, somewhat checked the flourishing hopes of the English people, and still more dispirited the ministers of Charles, who had expected a more auspicious commencement of the war. The government was in this state of depression when a Benedictine monk applied for a private audience of Clarendon, then lord chancellor; and on being admitted, opened a communication with the British minister, on the part of Bernard Van Ghalen, bishop of Munster, who offered to invade Holland, on the land side, with an army of 20,000 men, while England carried on the war by sea. More regular negotiations followed: Baron Wreden was sent over by the pugnacious bishop to conclude a regular treaty with the English court; and in consideration of 500,000 rix-dollars to be paid by England, the bishop agreed to commence hostilities at once. A young negotiator, afterwards famous as sir William Temple, was immediately sent over to watch the proceedings of the bishop, to superintend the payment of the money in the stipulated instalments, and to endeavour to effect a league in favour of England amongst the princes of the Lower Rhine.

New to diplomacy, Temple was easily deceived; and of a sanguine and eager temperament, he became persuaded that the bishop of Munster, who was in fact nothing but an interested, turbulent, and ambitious prince, with great desires and little means, was, on the contrary, a plain, sincere man, of high honour, considerable talents, and great influence. The bishop's forces and his preparations fell short of his promises; and while he was demanding the payment of the second instalment before it was due, and Temple was urging him vehemently, but in vain, to get his army into the field by the time which he had stipulated, Louis XIV. was taking more effectual steps to stop his proceedings, by causing his ambassador D'Estrades to notify to the prelate that if he invaded Holland he would find French troops ready to oppose him. Louis also kept his word,

and with prompt and zealous friendship despatched 6000 men to strengthen the land forces of the States. It is true, that he made them support and pay this reinforcement; but nevertheless the succour was well timed, and sufficient to be effectual. Prince Maurice of Nassau was put at the head of the Dutch troops, and accompanied, and in some degree directed, by Cornelius De Witt, the brother of the grand pensionary, easily checked the ill-conducted irruption of the bishop of Munster, and frustrated all the efforts for the conquest of Friesland made by his ill-organised forces.

At the same time De Witt entered into a negotiation with the bishop and other German princes, which, when the court of England least expected it, brought over the turbulent prelate in all appearance to the interests of Holland, leaving his former ally without any other fruit for much pains and great expense except an ill-conducted and defeated attempt, which threw great discredit upon all parties concerned. In the meanwhile the continued success of the duke of York raised the spirits of the English people: he had sailed early in the year with a fleet consisting of 107 ships of war and fourteen fire ships; and on the 3d of June he was encountered by Opdam with a somewhat inferior force off the English coast, near Harwich. The battle immediately began, and raged with great fierceness for some time; but in the midst of the action the vessel of the Dutch admiral caught fire and blew up, destroying Opdam and his whole crew, and damaging several of the neighbouring vessels. A complete defeat of the Dutch followed: nineteen of their vessels were captured, fourteen destroyed, and the whole of the rest of the fleet might have shared the same fate if the pursuit had been carried on with any degree of energy or spirit.

This signal disaster was peculiarly mortifying to De Witt, as it was under his immediate directions that Opdam engaged the duke of York, he having urged upon the States that it was better to fight at all risks; because if they were victorious, a certain ad-

vantage was gained, while, if they were defeated, the French would be obliged in honour to join them with whatever fleet they could command, which Louis had hitherto shown himself unwilling to do, from a consciousness of the pitiful figure his navy must make, when compared with that either of Holland or England. Various difficulties and mortifications of other kinds had preceded this in De Witt's career since the commencement of hostilities with England. The provinces of Guelders and Overyssel formally protested against the war, and refused to furnish any portion of the funds for carrying it on; and various tumults, together with the danger of a civil war in East Friesland, embarrassed the measures of Holland, and might have been fanned into a flame which would have affected the wellbeing of the whole country. It seems probable, also, that upon those provinces which manifested their disposition to separate their interests from the rest of the state, and upon Friesland, the domestic dissensions of which promised to render it an easy prey to any ambitious neighbour, the enterprising and greedy bishop of Munster had cast his eyes, with the determination of profiting by every opportunity for extending his petty principality at the expense of Holland. England was of course also eager to foment the dissensions which crippled the efforts of her adversary; and there were not wanting agents, even amongst the Dutch, to undertake the ungenerous task of exciting dissatisfaction in the people, and widening the breach between the dissentient provinces and their brethren. The energy and activity of De Witt, however, overcame all difficulties; and his clear eloquence and powerful reasoning succeeded in persuading the dissatisfied of their true interests. The dissensions in Friesland were healed; and proceeding himself with two other deputies to negotiate with the people of Guelders and Overyssel, De Witt so successfully exerted his influence, that those provinces not only withdrew their opposition to the general measures of the States against England, but agreed at once to furnish their quota for carrying on

the war; and not being prepared at the moment with the necessary funds, raised them in the speediest manner under the form of a loan.

The death of Opdam and the total defeat of their fleet, as may well be supposed, spread consternation throughout Holland; and various minor reverses which took place in the course of August and September tended to increase the general depression: but, as De Witt had anticipated, the successes of England drove the French court to an absolute declaration of war against Charles II., and a small force was added to the naval strength of Holland, though a much greater moral effect was produced by this decisive measure of the French cabinet.

In the meantime, an unexpected evil had occurred in the rise of severe dissensions between the famous De Ruyter and the younger Van Tromp. A large East India fleet was about to put to sea; but, in consequence of various impediments, arising partly, it would seem, from the disputes of the admirals, partly from the apathy of some of the local authorities, nothing had been done to prepare a sufficient armament to convoy it safely out of the dangerous neighbourhood of England. Under these circumstances, De Witt and two other deputies were appointed by the States of Holland to prepare and command a fleet for the purpose of convoying the East India merchantmen for a certain distance on their voyage. Of the proceedings of the two other deputies little is known; but the conduct of De Witt in his naval command shows him in a new and extraordinary point of view. He proceeded immediately to the Texel; and by immense exertions succeeded in preparing the fleet for departure in a space of time which to others had seemed inadequate to accomplish one half of the task, and then himself going on board, he pressed the admirals to put to sea at once.

A new difficulty, however, now presented itself. De Witt was met by the reply, that the wind was unfavourable, and that there was no possibility of passing

the difficult mouth of the Texel, unless a complete change took place. In this opinion all the Dutch seamen concurred; and showing De Witt the three passages which exist at the mouth of the Texel, called the Land's Diep, the Slenk, and the Spaniard's Gut, they informed him that it was only by the two former that vessels of any size could get to sea. Even these passages, they assured him, were only practicable when the wind blew steadily from one of ten points of the compass, while the other twenty-two points, they alleged, rendered the passage impossible. De Witt had nothing but theories to oppose to the practical knowledge of the seamen; but his mathematical skill enabled him to demonstrate, that if their charts laid down the passages correctly, any one of twenty-eight points of the compass would serve to carry the vessels out. Not satisfied also with this discovery, he instantly conceived a doubt of the representations made regarding the three passages, and determined to ascertain whether the Spaniard's Gut were not as practicable as the others. He proceeded thither in the long boat of his vessel at the time of low water, and took the soundings along the whole of the passage with his own hand. The result fully justified his suspicions: he found that throughout its whole course the depth was at least double that which had been represented; that the banks and shallows, which the pilots had talked of, were entirely chimerical; and that it was, in fact, as safe and practicable as any of the three. The wind, according to his view, was perfectly favourable, especially for this passage; and on returning to the fleet, he announced to the officers his intention of instantly putting to sea through the very channel which they considered impassable.

Of course he was not suffered to execute this resolution without strenuous opposition and vehement remonstrances. All the elder seamen adhered to their opinion, and solemnly declared that the passage of the Spaniard's Gut was impracticable for large vessels; and that even if it were not, the wind was unfavourable, and would not

carry them out. De Witt took the responsibility upon himself; and, to silence all farther opposition, declared his purpose of leading the way in the largest vessel of the fleet. He accordingly weighed anchor on the 16th of August, 1665, and with the wind at S.S.W. sailed without difficulty through the dreaded passage, followed in safety by the whole Dutch fleet. Though surprise might be mingled with some degree of mortification, the Dutch officers could but respect the man they had unsuccessfully opposed; and from that day forward the passage which he had been the first to open for the Dutch commerce received the name of De Witt's Diep.

A good deal of jealousy and anger was naturally excited amongst the officers of the fleet at being placed under the command of landsmen — if Dutchmen can ever be looked upon as such; — and amongst the common sailors there appeared a certain degree of contempt for persons who were utterly unacquainted with the service in which they were now placed in authority. De Witt, however, soon found means of overcoming all prejudices against him; he effected a reconciliation between De Ruyter and Van Tromp; and, showing the greatest deference for the opinion of the naval officers in all cases where he was not sure of being right, he at the same time suggested an infinity of improvements and reforms which at once claimed their gratitude and insured their respect. The alterations which he introduced tended in a very great degree to render the service easier and more pleasant to the officers themselves; and his amelioration of the mode of life and discipline of the common sailors soon won their affection, while his conduct during a severe storm which they met with on the coast of Norway equally gained their respect. Throughout the course of two days, during which the tempest lasted, he scarcely ever quitted the deck; took no refreshment but with the crew; and in moments of danger set the example of working with his own hands, showing in his whole demeanour that calm resolution, prompt skill, and unin-

terrupted presence of mind, which sailors, of all men, are best calculated to appreciate and admire.

Notwithstanding his conduct on all these occasions, the numerous enemies whom he had left behind him, — the enemies of his genius, his honesty, his patriotism, and his power, — did not fail to take advantage of his absence to spread a thousand rumours unfavourable to the grand pensionary. They declared that he had thwarted the admirals in all their proceedings: they set forth the apparent folly of placing landsmen to control the proceedings of seamen; and they pretended that, in a thousand instances, the control exercised by De Witt and the other deputies had produced events disadvantageous and disreputable to the state. Either in consequence of having heard such rumours, or from a spontaneous movement of gratitude and regard, De Ruyter, by the first opportunity, wrote a public letter to the States, in which he spoke in the highest terms of the conduct of the deputies, and especially enlarged upon the very great advantage which he had derived from the counsels and assistance of De Witt. On the return of the pensionary to the Hague, he instantly drew up an accurate narrative of all that had occurred; and, in a speech of considerable length, explained every part of his conduct so fully to the States-General, that they proceeded to a solemn vote of thanks and reward, offering De Witt a considerable gratuity for the services he had performed during the expedition. The thanks of the States De Witt received as an honour and a distinction: but the sum which they offered him he declined, alleging that he was sufficiently repaid by having served his country; and adding that an act which might be used as a bad precedent should never receive his sanction, though performed in favour of himself.

The partisans of the house of Orange, however, failed not to attempt to stir up the lower classes of the people against the grand pensionary, though they had been unsuccessful in their endeavours to injure him with the States; and they again circulated the tale of

his having quarrelled with De Ruyter, and, by thwarting him in every scheme, prevented him from gaining any successes over the English. These reports, however, were contradicted by the conduct of De Ruyter himself; for, coming to the Hague while they were in full activity, the Dutch admiral took up his abode at the house of the grand pensionary, and De Witt was seen publicly living on terms of the greatest intimacy with a man whom his calumniators had represented as one of his bitterest enemies. The war with England, however, proceeded without relaxation; and it became necessary, once more, to hasten the preparation of a fleet to support the interests of Holland upon the ocean. De Witt was again appointed one of the deputies for the purpose of carrying this object into effect; and by the spirit of order which he so eminently possessed, as well as by that active energy which was another of his distinguishing characteristics, he surprised his countrymen by the astonishing rapidity with which he prepared the fleet, and he merited and received once more the solemn thanks of the States-General. Shortly after, De Ruyter and Van Tromp put to sea, and sailed in search of the English fleet.

Whether De Witt accompanied them or not is in some degree doubtful, though I am inclined to believe that such was not the case, and that the supposition of his having been present at the great battle which ensued between those two admirals on the part of Holland, and Monk and prince Rupert on the part of England, originated in his having drawn up a minute account of the engagement for the information of the States-General, and in the fact of the English fleet having suffered severely from the effect of chain-shot, which were undoubtedly of his invention, and were then employed for the first time. On the 1st of June, 1666, this battle commenced, and lasted for four days, with scarcely any intermission. At the end of that time, however, the fleets separated and returned to their several ports, in order to refit. Neither could be said to be defeated; but whatever ad-

vantage was gained was undoubtedly on the part of the Dutch. Their success, though of no great importance, induced them even to attempt more than one descent upon the English coast; and in the following July, the adverse fleets again encountered, but with a very different result. One of the most decisive actions of the whole war took place. Monk and prince Rupert completely defeated the Dutch fleet: twenty first-rate men of war being captured or sunk, and three admirals, with more than 4000 men, being killed upon the part of Holland. De Ruyter was almost driven insane by agony of mind. "What a wretch am I!" he exclaimed towards the end of the action, when he saw that no possibility remained of retrieving the day: "amongst so many thousand balls, is there not one to put and end to my wretched life!"

Forced to fly, De Ruyter and Van Tromp mutually threw the blame upon each other; and De Witt was despatched at the head of a body of commissioners to investigate the accusations and recriminations of both admirals, and make a report to the States upon the subject. This report was unfavourable to Van Tromp; and he was accordingly superseded, and the supreme command left in the hands of De Ruyter. The English now, to use the expression of the ambassador D'Estrades, were proved to be victorious, by remaining masters of the sea; and this mastery they retained for several months, till the shrewd policy of De Witt threw them off their guard, and once more restored the honour of the Dutch marine. Negotiations were opened between the United Provinces and their great rival; and while De Witt took measures to prevent the conferences from being carried on at the Hague, where the ambassadors might tamper with the partisans of the house of Orange, and be tampered with in turn, he held out such certain hopes of peace on terms advantageous to England, that Charles and his ministers, with lamentable carelessness, suffered their naval efforts to relax. Ere any treaty was signed, or

any positive assurance given that tranquillity would be even ultimately restored, De Ruyter and Cornelius de Witt, the brother of the pensionary, entered the Thames, took Sheerness, burned a number of ships of the line, and spread such consternation throughout England, that a greater number of vessels, and a larger quantity of stores, were sunk and destroyed by the English themselves, to prevent them from falling into the hands of the enemy, than even by the Dutch. Holland now treated at Breda under more advantageous circumstances, and peace was at length concluded between England and the United Provinces.

In the meantime, various circumstances affecting the private life of De Witt had taken place in Holland, and must not be passed over here. The young prince of Orange, with that skilful appreciation of the means of attaining his purposes which he afterwards displayed so strongly as William III. of England, determined upon placing himself under the guidance of the States of Holland, and more especially under the tuition of the grand pensionary himself. De Witt probably saw the object of this proceeding; but we are told by Burnet that, judging from the first there was a great probability that the prince would succeed in obtaining the object of his ambition, the pensionary applied himself both to manage the fortune of the house of Orange to the greatest advantage, and carefully to superintend the education of the prince himself, giving him a clear insight into all the affairs of state, and into the peculiar circumstances and wants of Holland. This was willingly confessed afterwards by William, who, with the cold judgment of a phlegmatic race, could calmly and perseveringly work the downfall and the death even of a man whose virtues he appreciated, and whose genius and services he acknowledged. Although this was an event of high political importance, the natural tendency of which was to frustrate the schemes of De Witt in favour of the liberties of his country, another occurrence, which took place about the

same time, was more painful to the grand pensionary, namely, the arrest and condemnation of De Buat, who was tried, condemned, and beheaded, for betraying the counsels of the state to the enemies of the republic. The treason of that person, it would appear, was discovered by De Witt himself, and the proofs against him were clear and distinct. Nevertheless, the deputies of the province of Zealand steadily and to the last opposed his execution; and the [illegible]tion adverse to the grand pensionary did not fail to attribute the severity which he showed in the present instance to personal enmity. That the outcry raised upon this foundation was factious there [illegible] an [illegible] little doubt, especially as we have an instance [illegible] De Witt having previously proceeded exactly in the sam[illegible] towards a friend and favourite of his own, accused of a similar crime. To do so agreed with all De Witt's maxims of policy, which were usually of a stern cast; and it is hardly fair, when a man fulfils general principles previously announced, to accuse him without distinct proof of acting upon any personal motives.

Scarcely was the peace concluded at Breda, when new difficulties began to cloud the political horizon of the United Provinces. From these difficulties, under the skilful management of De Witt, arose the greatest triumph that Holland ever attained; and from that triumph again, in consequence of the perfidy of Charles II., the false policy of Spain, the ambition of the house of Orange, and the fluctuating weakness which is the great vulnerable point in republican governments, proceeded all those disastrous events which stretched the United Provinces at the feet of France. The treaty of peace had not been signed at Breda when the claims of Louis XIV. to the Spanish Neherlands were publicly promulgated by that monarch, and his armies were in the field to support his asserted rights. The danger of his pretensions to the neighbouring states was at once seen by all the parties concerned; and it was equally the interest of England and

Holland, so lately enemies, to unite for the purpose of preventing the growth of a power which was likely in the end to overshadow them all. Charles II., however, had either been bribed or entrapped into giving a solemn promise to the French king not to enter into any treaty contrary to the interests of France, for one year from February, 1667; and this promise being kept secret, all the urgent persuasions of the Spaniards and all the advances of the Dutch, were met by the ministers of that corrupt king with shuffling and evasive diplomacy, which might well inspire the other nations of Europe with equal distrust and contempt.

De Witt, on the part of Holland, did all that it was possible for man to do to induce the English court to enter vigorously and strenuously into the only measures which could preserve the general peace of Europe, and limit the ambition of the French monarch. But the government of Arlington still treated the Dutch ambassadors with coldness, affected to distrust their sincerity, and even kept up the hypocritical farce so far as to deceive their own agent sir William Temple, and puzzle and embarrass him in his negotiations at Brussels. Temple had conceived, it would seem, a very unjust opinion of the character of De Witt, and had been led, by the skill with which the grand pensionary had availed himself of the limited assistance of France during the late war, to believe that the Dutch statesman had devoted himself to the interests of Louis, and that he was by no means perfectly sincere in his proposals for opposing the French aggressions upon the Low Countries. De Witt, however, though grateful to Louis for the assistance he had rendered, and perceiving clearly that Holland could not stand in a struggle with either France or England, without the support of the other power, saw the extreme danger of suffering the French king to take possession of the Spanish Netherlands, and was prepared to join in any reasonable scheme for frustrating that attempt. Of the straightforward nature of his views Temple was soon after convinced himself, by the very first in-

terview which he had with the grand pensionary at the Hague. Though resident at the court of Brussels, Temple obtained permission from his own government to visit Holland, and his account of his conversation with De Witt is curious and interesting. It is too long to be inserted here, but I cannot omit the result as summed up in his own words.

"After above two hours' discourse in private on these subjects," says the British ambassador, "I left him, and *judge him either to be a plain, steady man, or very artificial in seeming so;* more properly *homme de bon sens,* than *homme d'esprit,* pointing still to that which is solid in business, and not to be imposed upon easily. These I take to be his talents; so that *whoever deals with him must go the same plain way that he pretends to in his negotiations, without refining or colouring, or offering shadow for substance,* which he complains of much in the marquis, and perhaps with reason.

"I am confident he is hearty in the point of defending Flanders, which he calls in his discourse *le bon parti;* and I hear from other hands that Holland, Zealand, Friesland, and Utrecht, have resolved it, and endeavour to bring the other provinces to the same opinion; and that De Ruyter has positive orders to convoy the Spanish plate fleet, wherein their merchants are so deeply concerned. But these intentions, I suppose, they will cover, as much as they can, till they see how far they can engage his majesty in them, which will be the chief business of their ambassage."

Great efforts were now made by France to keep England and Holland at variance, to quiet the apprehensions of the Dutch, and to amuse the unprincipled king of England and his mercenary cabinet with the prospect of accepting his mediation alone, if he held himself separate from the government of the United Provinces. De Ruvigni, the French ambassador in London, was directed to occupy the English court with negotiations concerning a closer alliance of the two countries; and D'Estrades was ordered jealously to

watch De Witt, in order to frustrate his efforts for an alliance with England, while to the grand pensionary himself he held out the inducement of a large share in the spoils of Spain, if he consented to support sincerely the designs of France. The successes of the latter country, however, alarmed more and more the other nations of Europe; and towards the end of the year 1667, Temple, though often deceived by his imagination, perceived, and clearly laid down, the true policy of England and Holland. "If," says he, in a letter to Arlington,—"if his majesty and Holland can think fit to agree so far between this and the end of January, as to declare absolutely they will put an end to this war, and assist that crown which accepts the peace they offer, there is no doubt they may either make a glorious war against France, or an easy peace."

Still all Temple's suggestions were received with coldness by the British ministry; and it would appear that De Witt at length began to perceive there must be some secret obstacle which impeded the proceedings of the British cabinet; and while he negotiated with Spain for the purpose of affording her, at all events, pecuniary aid, he endeavoured to force the English court into a declaration of its real intentions, by affecting "to have changed colour within a month past," to use the words of Temple, and to be veering towards the interests of France. This policy succeeded; for we find immediately after, that Arlington determined on uniting with Holland, according to the proposal of De Witt, and the only difficulty was to ascertain what were now the real intentions of the grand pensionary. Temple was immediately ordered to proceed to the Hague, and learn from De Witt himself whether the States would really and effectively enter into a league offensive and defensive with England, for the protection of the Spanish Netherlands against all countries whatsoever. Temple hastened to obey, and in December, 1667, commenced his conferences with De Witt. The grand pensionary, on his part, opened his views to the English negotiator

with the utmost candour; told him the steps which had already been taken by Holland, and the steps which she yet intended to take; expressed his great willingness to co-operate with England; but laid it down as a fundamental maxim of Dutch policy never to enter into an offensive league with any nation whatsoever. To a defensive alliance he expressed himself well disposed, and promised that the States would supply the king of England with money, if he felt himself bound to employ force for the protection of the Netherlands.

Temple immediately hastened back to England to communicate De Witt's reply; and on the 1st of January received his instructions to return, and conclude the defensive league which De Witt had proposed. De Witt met him with the same candour which he had before evinced: but the measure was too important to be taken without some consideration; and he pointed out to Temple that France had been an old and tried friend to the United Provinces, while England was a new friend, and had shown but little constancy in her friendships. After a long and important conference, which displays in the most gratifying manner how nobly two men of high principles and great talents may conduct a most difficult negotiation, Temple, by the advice of De Witt, proceeded to visit count Dhona, the Swedish minister at the Hague, for the purpose of endeavouring to gain that power as a party to the proposed alliance. Dhona acceded almost at once; but one great difficulty remained in the way of all their proceedings. By the constitution of the United Provinces the States-General had not the power of signing a general treaty without the expressed consent of each of the provincial states; and Temple, Dhona, and De Witt were all equally certain that to wait for such consent would completely overthrow their whole designs. Temple, however, determined to attempt the negotiation of the treaty with the States-General alone; De Witt and Dhona promised their co-operation; and the British ambassador was received to a formal au-

dience by their high mightinesses, and afterwards was admitted to a conference with the secret committee.

The reply which he received to his proposal was, that they could not obtain powers from the different states to conclude the treaty under two months; and that in the meantime, a commercial league between England and Holland might be arranged. The conference here broke off, for Temple had no powers to conclude such a treaty as that proposed; but the farther management of the matter was delegated by the eight secret commissioners to De Witt and Isbrant, and on the Monday discussions were renewed between them and Temple. The great point of difficulty was, that the Dutch commissioners demanded, as a plausible excuse for violating the constitution and concluding with Temple at once, that certain provisional articles of the treaty of Breda, highly advantageous to the commerce of Holland, should be reinserted, in the defensive treaty now proposed, as perpetual articles. To this Temple could not consent, merely for want of powers. De Witt proposed that, in the meantime, England and Holland should proceed to mediate vigorously between France and Spain regarding Flanders. But Temple would not hear of such a proceeding, seeing that without the defensive league England, having no tie upon Holland, might call upon herself a single-handed war with France. No means of overcoming these difficulties were apparent; and yet it was evident that if time were given to the French diplomatists, they would contrive means to delay or prevent the execution of the treaty on the part of Holland: the loosely connected institutions of which country always afforded the opportunity of sowing dissensions amongst its various members.

This consideration induced Temple, as a last resource, to appeal in some degree to a principle seldom recognised in diplomatic transactions, — the generous feeling of his fellow-negotiators. He said, that if he were better known to the Dutch diplomatists, he would have made them a proposal in order to extricate them from their

difficulties, which he could not venture upon, as they were not aware how firmly he adhered to his word. They requested him at all events to state what that proposal would have been; on which he informed them, that he had written to his own government for permission to insert the stipulations they demanded, and that he doubted not such permission would be obtained. His proposal then was, that if they would proceed at once to draw up and conclude the defensive treaty, leaving the commercial points as they stood at the time, he would immediately on receiving the answer of his own court, insert, as a separate article, all those stipulations for which the Dutch were so anxious, if the reply authorised him to do so; and for this he pledged his word. De Witt and Isbrant, at so unusual a proceeding, gazed for a moment the one in the countenance of the other; and then De Witt, extending his hand to Temple, declared that he would trust him; and that, if he made that promise as an honest man, the treaty should go forward. Temple reiterated his engagement: every exertion was made to hurry forward the treaty; and in five days from the time of its first proposal the Triple Alliance was signed and sealed, by which measure Louis XIV. was compelled to cease, for a time, his ambitious proceedings in regard to Flanders.

Sir William Temple's description of the impression made upon him by De Witt is too valuable to be omitted in the biography of the grand pensionary. "I found him as plain, as direct, and square, in the course of this business as any man could be; though often stiff in points where he thought any advantage could accrue to his country; and have all the reason in the world to be satisfied with him: and for his industry, no man had ever more, I am sure; for these five days, at least, neither of us spent any idle hours neither day nor night."

In the course of these proceedings a subject had been broached, which I have not noticed, in order not

to distract attention from the main object. It is necessary, however, to mention it now in elucidation of De Witt's views and policy. Charles II., in sending Temple to the Hague, had directed him to say, that he had not forgotten the interests of his nephew, the prince of Orange; but that he waved all consideration thereof for the present, in pursuit of the greater purpose which England and Holland had in view. To this De Witt replied, "that he never failed to see the prince once or twice a week, and grew to have a particular affection for him, and that the States designed the captain-generalship of all the forces for him, as soon as, by his age, he became capable of it."

There is no reason to believe that De Witt was insincere. The high qualities of William's mind must have already struck him: he had, it is proved, devoted much attention to his education, and such attention is almost sure to generate affection. The captain-generalship might well be granted to him without danger to the freedom of the state; and in order to guard that freedom, which was the great object of De Witt's life, the grand pensionary had, previous to his conversation with sir William Temple, taken a measure which he had every reason to believe would prevent the captain-generalship ever becoming a stepping-stone to the stadtholderate. In August, 1667, he had caused an edict to be promulgated by the States-General, for suppressing for ever the office of stadtholder; and he had laboured so to frame it that its permanent character might merit the title which was bestowed upon it, of The Perpetual Edict. In the December following, this solemn act was confirmed by the provincial states; so that there can be no doubt that, at the time De Witt publicly announced to Temple the purpose of the States to confer the captain-generalship upon the prince of Orange, he had every reason to believe that in consenting to that measure the freedom of his country was secured. The abolition of the office of stadtholder certainly affected the house of Orange in a direct manner;

but it did not bear upon its face so invidious an aspect as that article of the secret treaty with Cromwell, by which the princes of Orange were by name excluded from an office which was not then formally suppressed. The young prince either did not feel himself personally aggrieved, or had already obtained sufficient command over himself to suppress all signs of resentment. He was present at a grand entertainment given by De Witt on the signature of the triple alliance, and opened the ball which followed in the evening. De Witt, also — then in the forty-third year of his age — did not think it below the dignity of his character, or his station, to dance on the same occasion; and it was remarked by the foreigners present, as a trait not without interest, that the great statesman, the rigid republican, the grave mathematician, danced with more grace and accuracy than any one in the room. When the prince of Orange retired, De Witt accompanied him to his carriage, remained some time in conversation with him at the door, and on their parting William is said to have expressed the strongest feelings of regard and gratitude towards a man whom he suffered, ere many months were at an end, to be sacrificed to popular fury, without making an effort to save or to protect him.

Immediately after the signature of the Triple Alliance the Dutch and English proceeded to the mediation which had been determined upon between France and Spain. The famous Dutch negotiator, Van Beuninghen, was sent to Paris; and there, while other negotiations went on at Aix-la-Chapelle, he treated in person with the ministers of Louis. Temple remained for some time at the Hague; and the whole of his communications with De Witt afford a pleasing and instructive picture of the Dutch statesman. If we may believe the portrait drawn by the pen of sir William Temple, there appeared in De Witt all the frank sincerity, all the plain candour, all the noble integrity of Sully, without the passionate vehemence and haughty arrogance of the French minister, and with far greater

penetration and diplomatic skill. De Witt had now a very difficult game to play, between the claims of the feeble house of Austria and the military cupidity of the French king. Spain, on the one hand, believing that she could obtain much more through the mediation of Holland and England than Louis XIV. would have granted under any circumstances, hesitated and protracted all the negotiations; while France, on the other hand, evinced a strong disposition to pursue her conquests, and obtain greater advantages ere she consented to peace. In the meantime, Charles II. was carrying on a number of base negotiations with the court of France, unknown to his ambassadors and allies; and the whole affairs of the Continent became so complicated, that, in spite of all the efforts of De Witt, France issued out of the negotiation in the very position which was most likely to be detrimental to Holland and advantageous to herself. Louis retained his possession of a great part of Flanders, giving up Franche Comté; and kept open the door into the Netherlands, of which he had obtained the command, while he only resigned that which he could at any time resume.

It was some time, however, before the English monarch was so completely brought over to the party of France as to justify Louis in making that vengeful attack upon Holland, which had so nearly ended in her utter destruction; and in the meanwhile, we find that De Witt was living on terms of the greatest intimacy and kindness with the prince of Orange, taking pains to instruct him in all affairs of state, and showing, according to the account of sir William Temple, that devotion to the education of the future king of England, which might be expected from one who foresaw, with almost prophetic powers, that the youth against whose ambition he had striven so hard to raise up an insurmountable barrier, would eventually rule the state of which he was then but a citizen. It would be too long to enter into all the negotiations which filled up the time between the conclusion of the treaty of Aix-la-Chapelle

and the irruption of the French King into Holland. Temple remained ambassador at the Hague, and during the whole of his intercourse with De Witt found that great statesman honest, straightforward, and true.

In the mean time, the base king of England was proceeding in a manner the most opposite, — deceiving his country, deceiving his allies, selling his honour, serving his enemies, and employing the money dishonourably gained, for dishonourable purposes. It was in vain, however, that Charles, or his ministers, endeavoured to make Temple the tool of their iniquitous schemes against the Dutch. Finding that he was incapable of taking the management of their dishonest policy, the ministers of Charles recalled him from the Hague, and sent sir George Downing, the enemy of De Witt, and the promoter of the former war between England and Holland. From this step, as well as from every other, it became evident that the faithless king of England had joined his interest to that of France, which country was now in active preparation. De Witt negotiated, remonstrated, offered satisfaction for any imaginary injuries, but in vain; and at length the first stroke of the coming war was struck by admiral Holmes attacking the Dutch Levant fleet. He was driven off by the skill and courage of the Dutch admirals; and immediately afterwards declarations of war against Holland were published by both France and England.

De Witt now prepared to meet the coming storm: for some time, even before the breaking out of the war, he had maintained a large naval force in active preparation: but he had committed the only great oversight with which his administration can be charged, — he had failed to perceive that in the coming war the destiny of Holland would depend upon her strength by land. He had prepared, once more, for maritime hostilities: but when nearly 200,000 men were gathering upon the Rhine by an inimical power, De Witt did indeed something towards strengthening the garrisons of fortresses, and collecting an army upon the menaced

frontier; yet he showed none of that energetic vigour, and wise activity, which might have been expected from his character. Whatever he had done, it is probable that the troops of Holland, unaccustomed for many years to warfare, lax in discipline, and commanded by inexperienced officers, would have effected little in opposition to Turenne, Condé, Luxemburg, Vauban, and all the best generals in France, commanding troops lately habituated to warfare, daily improving in discipline, paid with the promptitude of unquestioned power, and supplied by a comissariat exceeding in regularity any thing that Europe had previously produced. Certain it is, however, that De Witt had either neglected the land forces of the state from inadvertence, or prepared them inefficiently, from utter want of experience in that branch of the service. It is true an army nominally of 70,000 men was collected, but the numbers were fictitious; and the force which was really assembled was young, disorderly, and ill-disciplined.

The commander appointed to direct the operations of this force was William prince of Orange; and however skilful he afterwards proved himself to be, however calm, wise, and energetic, both as a statesman and a soldier, his nomination in February, 1672, to the high and important charge of captain-general and admiral of Holland, at the early age of twenty-two, was evidently conceded for the purpose of averting the war much more than for the purpose of conducting it. The events by which his early appointment was brought about are as follows. No sooner had the designs of France, and the co-operation of England therein, been made known in the United Provinces, than loud and increasing clamours were raised against De Witt and his partisans. The pensionary was accused of excluding the prince of Orange from all share of power, for the gratification of his own private ambition; the virtues and high qualities of the young prince were magnified to the sky; the populace murmured and threatened; the States-General themselves were moved; and at length, as we have said,

the provincial states of Holland in the first instance, and in a few days after the States-General, elected William prince of Orange to the captain-generalship. De Witt himself was obliged to yield, though he pointed out strongly to the States both the youth of the prince, and the impolicy of naming him to that station in a time of danger which had been refused to him in moments of tranquillity. He, however, tendered to him, on his taking his seat in the States, the oath of adhesion to the Perpetual Edict, by which the office of stadtholder was abolished for ever; and William, with true political facility, accepted the pledge, which he proposed to violate as soon as an occasion presented itself.

No sooner was war openly declared than William hastened to take the command of the army, though his judgment was controlled by deputies from the States; and at the same time Cornelius de Witt, as sole deputy from the States-General, proceeded, with great pomp, and somewhat unnecessary display, to the fleet, which almost immediately set sail, under the command of De Ruyter, and encountered the English and French navies, under the duke of York and the maréchal Destrées, in Southwold Bay. The date of the battle which ensued has been placed by various historians at various points, between the 6th of May and the 27th of June; but certain it is that the result of the battle left no party any very just cause for claiming the victory. On the one side, the earl of Sandwich and La Rabinière were killed, and on the other admiral Van Ghent. Cornelius de Witt again displayed his courage and his skill upon the ocean, and then returned sick to Dort, where he found the faction opposed to himself and his brother excited to a degree of frenzy, and thirsting for their blood. Confined to his house by illness, he was unable to take any measures for stemming the torrent.

The forces of France were, in the meantime, making terrific progress in the south and east; town after town surrendered without the slightest resistance; the army of Holland dared not show itself in

face of that of France; and on the 11th of June, the grand pensionary, who was seldom accompanied by more than one servant, was attacked in the streets of the Hague by four persons, one of whom, a fanatic advocate, named Vandergraef, wounded him so severely that he was obliged to be carried home, and remained for several weeks incapable of business. Vandergraef was taken and executed; but another person, known to be one of the assassins, named Bornelagh, was suffered to retain the office of postmaster at the Hague, and even received marks of favour from the government which succeeded that of De Witt. Still the successes of the French went on; Utrecht delivered her keys; Amsterdam itself was threatened; the popularity of the prince of Orange increased every day, and that of the brothers De Witt decreased. At length, while both were ill in bed, the one from his exertions on board the fleet, the other from the blows of an assassin, a popular tumult took place in Dort, the people broke into the town house, forced the magistrates to proclaim the prince of Orange stadtholder, and compelled Cornelius de Witt himself to sign the act by which that dignity was conferred. The states of the province of Zealand immediately followed, and on the 2d of July nominated the prince to the stadtholderate; and on the following day the states of Holland repealed the Perpetual Edict, and solemnly raised the prince to the station for which he had so long panted. William, without affecting any scruples which he did not feel, with regard to breaking an oath which he had taken against his will, accepted the dignity at once, and prepared, with the stern determination of his character, to use it for the services of his country, as well as for the purposes of his own ambition.

Raised to the station he had so long desired, it would appear that the young stadtholder might have forgiven the opposition of the De Witts, and loving their patriotism, as well as admiring their talents, might have employed them in the highest offices be-

neath himself, for the benefit of the country he now ruled. Such was not the case, however: their lives were a reproach to him; and the services of the grand pensionary, by demanding the tribute of gratitude from an unwilling spirit, was naturally repaid by hate. The clamours of the Orange faction became more vehement and intense after their object was attained. De Witt was accused of having plundered the state of 80,000 guilders a year during his administration, and of having employed the secret service money for his own purposes. He applied immediately to the prince of Orange to discountenance such accusations, and to do him justice. The stadtholder replied, with his usual phlegmatic coldness, that as to the libels, the pensionary must learn to bear them as he had done; and as to doing him justice, that was out of his power, as he knew nothing of the matter. De Witt then declared that he would do justice to himself; and he showed, by the acknowledgment of the States-General themselves, that though the secret service money was by custom placed at the disposal of the grand pensionary, he, foreseeing that such a charge might be brought against him, had refused to meddle with it in any shape; and that he had never received any thing but the salary of his office, amounting, at first, to about 300*l.* per annum, and afterwards to about 700*l.* per annum; except a public gratuity voted him by the nobles of his own province, for services that he had performed as their advocate.

On the 4th of August following, he demanded leave to retire from office: the permission to do which was granted; but was accompanied by a solemn vote of thanks for his services during nineteen years. He then drew up a full and clear account of the state of the finances, which he laid before the grand council, in order to put upon record the clearest proofs of his having acted honestly throughout the whole of his administration. Private griefs claimed the whole of his attention till the end of his career; and the fate of his

brother, who was the first object of attack, involved his own. While the Ruard Van Putten, as his brother was called, was still ill, a barber named Tichlaer applied frequently to see him, and was at length ordered to be admitted; but the wife of Cornelius de Witt, suspecting the man of some intention of murdering her husband, ordered the door to be kept open, and some of the servants to watch. The man perceiving that he was suspected, would not declare his business, and being coldly treated by the sick officer, exclaimed, "Since you will not hear me, I will be gone." He immediately proceeded to the camp of the prince of Orange, and accused Cornelius de Witt of a design to poison the prince.

The Ruard was immediately arrested, and on his trial it was shown that the accuser was under sentence for perjury, rape, and various other crimes; that he had never seen De Witt but once, and then not without witnesses. But notwithstanding all this, the court ordered the faithful servant of the republic to be put to the torture, in order to bring him to a confession. But the agonies of the rack could produce nothing from the stern republican, who, in the midst of his pangs, repeated the commencement of the third ode of the third book of Horace, beginning—"Justum et tenacem;" and his judges were forced to bring in a sentence which, while it acquitted him of crime, assigned to him the punishment of a criminal. He was doomed to perpetual banishment; and his father, who was still living, instantly proceeded, with his brother, lately grand pensionary, to the prison of the Hague, where he had been confined, in order to remove him in his carriage.

The accounts of what followed, like those of all public commotions, are confused and contradictory. All that is known with certainty is, that a report was instantly spread amongst the lower orders that Cornelius de Witt had been condemned, but was about to be rescued by his brother; that an immense multitude

assembled about the prison; and that the burgher guard were called out, but did nothing to stop the tumult or save the victims, except by making the carriage drive away in which the father was waiting for his two sons, whom he was never destined to behold again. After remaining a considerable length of time in the prison with his brother, the grand pensionary perceived that the tumult was increasing instead of diminishing; and, either voluntarily, as some accounts report, or forced by the mob breaking in, as other statements affirm, he descended from the room in which they had been sitting, leading Cornelius by the hand. At the foot of the stairs he was wounded by a pike on the forehead; and seeing that it was the determination of the people, whose rights and liberties he had so firmly defended, to reward his services by death, he threw his cloak over his head, and recommending his soul to God, fell under a hundred blows. His brother died by his side; and carrying their bodies to the common gallows, the assassins hung them together, the pensionary a foot higher than his brother. Nor did their barbarity stop here. The corpse of each was mangled in a fearful manner: pieces of their flesh were cut off, and are said to have been eaten by the people; and their hearts were torn from their bodies, and were exposed publicly for several days by one of their unpunished murderers.

Thus died John de Witt, in the 47th year of his age, by a fate which he seems more than once to have anticipated. His character is before the world in his life, for it was one of continual public services; and his praise was best spoken by his enemies. "I am heartily sorry," said Charles II., "for the fate of John de Witt."—"We have lost," said the prince of Orange, "in the grand pensionary, a great minister, and a great man. His genius was equal to his employments, and the virtues of his private life added lustre to his talents for public business." Need we say any more?

In regard to the character of John de Witt this is

surely enough; for the praise of two men who ruined his fortunes, and contributed to his death, can hardly be suspected of exaggeration. The picture, however, given of him by bishop Burnet, referring as much to his habits as to his character, may likewise be cited. "He was a frank, sincere man," says the bishop; "without fraud, or any other artifice but silence; to which he had so accustomed the world, that it was not easy to know whether he was silent on design or custom. He had a great clearness of apprehension; and when anything was proposed to him, how new soever, he heard all patiently, and then asked such questions as occurred to him; and by the time he had done all this, he was as much master of the proposition as the person was that had made it." His mathematical studies had given him a great fondness for reducing every thing to a precise rule; and yet in his political maxims, he was extremely fond of shadowing forth his meaning in allegories. I shall conclude by adding some of his apothegms, and some of his fables; though it is difficult to select them, as in the whole work from which they are taken he never for a moment strayed from that pointed reference to Holland which gave to every passage an individual, rather than a general, application.

"A defensive war is a consumptive war."

"No rulers can subsist unless they put on the skin of a lion, as well as that of a fox."

"The truth is, great monarchs are justly compared to the lion, who is king of beasts, and never contented with the produce of their own country, but living upon the flesh of their enemies; I wish I could not say subjects."

"Republics, governing with more gentleness, wisdom, and moderation, have naturally a more powerful and numberless train of inhabitants adhering to them than monarchs, and therefore stand not in need of such maxims, especially those that subsist by trade, who ought in this matter to follow the commendable example of a cat; for she never converses with strange beasts,

but either keeps at home, or accompanies those of her own species, meddling with none but in order to defend her own; very vigilant to provide for food, and preserve her young ones; she neither barks nor snarls at those that provoke or abuse her; so shy and fearful that, being pursued, she immediately takes her flight into some hole or place of natural strength, where she remains quiet till the noise be over. But if it happens that she can by no means avoid the combat, she is more fierce than a lion, defends herself with tooth and nail, and better than any other beast, making use of all her well husbanded strength, without the least neglect or fainting in her extremity. So that by these arts, that species enjoy more quiet every where, live longer, are more acceptable, and in greater number than lions, tigers, wolves, foxes, bears, or any other beasts of prey, which often perish by their own strength, and are taken where they lie in wait for others."

"A cat, indeed, is outwardly like a lion; yet she is, and will remain, but a cat still; and so we, who are naturally merchants, cannot be changed into soldiers."

"All states and sovereigns ought not to enter into alliances with those who are stronger, but rather with such as are inferior to themselves in power; by which means they may always covenant that the weaker shall first make good his engagement."

"When an inferior power treats with one superior to him, he injures himself if he do not contract that the stronger shall first perform that which he promises."

"The lion, king of beasts, having heard many complaints of his subjects, concerning the cruel persecution and murders committed by the huntsman, and fearing that if he should any longer bear such unrighteous dealings, he should lose his royal honour and respect among his subjects, went in person to fight the huntsman, who, first by his shooting, afterwards by his lance, and lastly with his sword, so wounded the approaching lion that he was necessitated to fly; and having lost much of his strength by his wounds, and more of his honour and

esteem by his flight, said, with a lamentable voice, 'To my sorrow, I find the truth of this proverb, The strength of Sampson is not sufficient for one that is resolved to revenge evil with evil; but he that can wait and be patient, shall find his enemy defeated to his hand. What need had I to straighten this crooked piece of wood? It had been better for me to have left those injuries to time; and perhaps some tiger, wolf, or bear, having with like imprudence sought out the huntsman, might have been strong and fortunate enough to have killed him in the fight.'"

"A certain strong wise man, meeting a strong fool, who had undertaken to force a stiver from every man he met, gave him a stiver without a blow or a word. Whereupon some of his acquaintance, young people, blamed him for it, using these words, 'God hath given you at least as much strength, and more wisdom than this lewd fellow, whereby you would undoubtedly have had the victory, and delivered the world from this rascal: whereas, contrarily, you will be despised if you do this.' But the wise man answered, 'They that buy their peace do best. And besides, I know it is ill fighting with a strong fool; but you know not the value of your own peace, welfare, and life, and much less the manner of the world. For though I were not an old merchant, but a prudent soldier, yet I shall tell you that he who will not bestow a stiver to keep peace, must have his sword always drawn; and he that will be always fighting, though with the benefit of ten advantages against one danger, must certainly lay out more than ten stivers to buy arms. And as where there is hewing of wood there will be splinters flying on every side; so, after a man has suffered the smart, he must give a good reward to the chirurgeon and physician, even when the best happens: the bucket will come home broken at last; and the best fighters at last find their masters, for the stoutest Hercules is sometimes soonest beaten. Next,' said he, 'time will inform you that I am not to straighten all the crooked wood I shall meet in this world; for I

assure you that it will happen* to this strong fool as it did formerly with the foolish frog, who, finding a wise crab swimming in the water, threatened to kill him if he found him any more there. The good-natured crab thinking, as those who willingly shun a mad ox which they might kill with a gun, that he would also shun this creature, gave the frog good words, swimming immediately backward, according to his custom, and giving place to him. But because stupidity causes boldness and self-conceit, the frog concluded that he was stronger than the crab, and so fell upon him. The crab defended himself stoutly, and at last pinched the frog immediately dead. And seeing the world is full of fools, I tell you that this coxcomb, growing confident by a few good successes, will soon find another fool who will knock him o' the head, and rid the world of him. It is certainly much better that a fool, and not a wise man, should put his life in the balance with this fool.' Which prediction was soon after verified by experience; for, awhile after, this fool setting upon other people, found at last as foolish, cross, and strong a fellow as himself, that would rather fight than give him a stiver, who knocked him down and killed him. Upon which the wise man caused some sayings to be engraven over him; among which were these—*The number of fools is infinite;* and *To cure a fool requires one and a half,* for without blows it cannot be done."

"A certain fox, conceiting himself not able to subsist if the wolves and bears lived in mutual amity, stirred up the one against the other; and afterwards, fearing lest the wolf, which favoured him less, should get the better, and then, finding himself without enemy, should destroy him, resolved to strengthen the bear privately with food which he had spared for himself, and to see the fight between them, under pretence of being mediator, but really to feed upon the blood of the conquered; which, when he tasted, he was so transported with the relish, that, rather than forbear the blood,

he let the bear have so much of his other natural food that he was grown weak. But the two combating beasts, observing this ill design of the pretended mediator, and his weakness together, destroyed this blood-thirsty fox; the one premeditately, the other by the fortune of the war: besides, he fell unpitied. For suppose the wolf and bear had grown so weak by the fox's artifices that they could not have hurt him, yet there were lions, tigers, and other beasts of prey, which could as certainly and as easily have devoured him, because he had lost his strength, and could no longer in any extremity run to his hole, and thereby save and defend himself.

"Thus God and nature punisheth those that abuse their strength, and takes the crafty in their own subtilty. As false self-love is the root of all mischief, so prudence and well-grounded self-love are the only cause of all good and virtuous actions. Pursuant to which, as we say, *Do well, and look not backward,* is the greatest polity *Holland* can use. And the richest blessing God can pour down upon a nation is to unite the interests thereof to peace, and the welfare of mankind; according to the good rule, *He that loves himself aright is a friend to all the world.*"

FRANCOIS MICHEL LE TELLIER, MARQUIS DE LOUVOIS.

BORN 1641, DIED 1691.

Louvois, the famous minister-at-war of Louis XIV., was born at Paris on the 18th of January, 1641. He was the son of the well known Le Tellier, an attached dependant of Mazarin. During the whole of the troublous time of the Fronde, the cardinal was served with zeal and skill by the father of Louvois; and when he again reached the summit of power, he rewarded the affection which had displayed itself in adversity by high favour and distinction. The father of Louvois was supposed by some to have been secretly a jesuit; but in all probability this belief was solely founded upon his possessing the submissive and insinuating cunning which marked the followers of Ignatius Loyola. No one, however, was better calculated to educate a youth in the habits of courtly intrigue; no one had more successfully pursued the paths of flattery and servility during times even of difficulty and danger; and no one could better point out where to bow with humble deference, and where to resist with cold determination. At a very early period Le Tellier began to initiate his son into the affairs of state, and laboured to render him equally a good minister and a successful courtier; he taught him habits of business and knowledge of detail, and showed him that no deference was too great, no species of submission too extraordinary, towards the absolute monarch on whom his fortunes depended.

As soon as his age permitted, Louvois was introduced by his father at the court of Louis XIV., and well instructed in the part he was to play. The young aspirant to official distinction took every means to ingratiate himself with the young monarch, who, born nearly at

the same period as himself, educated in the same times, and passing through the same troubles, had many more feelings in common with the son of his minister than is usually found between monarch and subject. It thus was not difficult for Le Tellier to obtain the nomination of his son to the survivorship of his own post of secretary-at-war; and having remained for five years after the death of Mazarin working in the office of his father, Louvois was appointed secretary of state in 1666, at which time Le Tellier was raised to the dignity of chancellor.

By this time Louis XIV. had become habituated to the task of government: under the wise administration of Colbert the finances of the state had recovered from the dilapidated condition in which Fouquet and Mazarin had left them; and the royal treasury, which had long been void, now overflowed with wealth, the fruit of wisdom, regularity, activity, and economy. The reputation which Colbert had established had long been an object of envy to Le Tellier, and was not less so to his son; and the first design of the new secretary of state was to rival Colbert, if he could not supplant him, in the affections of his master; to employ the resources which his wisdom and frugality had provided, in those efforts which might give to him, Louvois, an ascendency in the councils of the king, and to thwart the great minister in all those points where his views were at all opposed to the wishes and interests of the house of Le Tellier. That Louvois would have proceeded as he did in almost all instances; that he would have stimulated Louis to war, when peace was the better policy of France; that he would have persecuted the protestants, when they ought to have been protected and upheld; and that he would have done all those acts in which he was most opposed to Colbert, whether Colbert had ever lived or not,—is very probable: but, nevertheless, there was a virulence and an acrimony in the manner of doing them, which showed that jealousy and hatred had their share in the motives, and teach us

to see personal rivalry as well as individual ambition amongst the springs of action which carried forward all the operations of Louvois.

Whether the brief war, which took place between France and England in the year 1666, is to be attributed to his counsels or not can hardly be told; but there is little doubt that before he received the absolute appointment of secretary-at-war he long exercised all the functions of that important office, and, with his usual haughty and overbearing ambition, resisted the authority even of his own father, in the very office of which that father was the head. Nevertheless, the war thus commenced being almost entirely carried on by the marine, which was more immediately under the direction of Colbert, did not produce that degree of gratification which the eager mind of the young and fierce Louvois must have desired. He was at this time in his twenty-fifth year; and, burning to signalise himself in a more extensive sphere, he willingly suffered a peace to be negotiated with England, pointing out to Louis that a more glorious field and a more worthy object were open to his views in the claim which he had upon the Spanish Netherlands.

No doubt can exist, although the assertion of these claims might have suggested itself to the mind of Louis as a vague and indistinct aspiration, that to Louvois was owing the first project reduced to a tangible shape for pursuing the alleged rights of Louis by force of arms, at a period when Spain was unprepared to resist the force which France could bring into the field. Whatever might be the real feelings of his heart, Louis affected to experience considerable scruples in regard to attacking the Spanish monarchy after the treaty of the Pyrenees, and to seizing upon territories in right of his wife of which she had made a formal renunciation. His first hesitation was easily overcome: there wanted not in France doctors of law and learned theologians, ready at the call of the minister and the monarch, to prove that the projects of the one

and the wishes of the other were perfectly reconcileable with every principle of justice and religion. Louvois found without difficulty a number of persons to relieve the conscience of the king of all responsibility regarding his own oath or the renunciation of the queen.

But Louvois found a more formidable obstacle to his purposes in the political sagacity of Colbert, and the straightforward but keen and powerful sense of Turenne. Both these great men were consulted by Louis on the subject of the intended proceedings against the Netherlands; and both unanimously exerted their utmost powers to dissuade the king from following the counsel of Louvois. Colbert laid before the monarch the state of the country at the time: he showed him what six years of peace had produced; and he besought him earnestly to avoid every temptation to warfare, in order to let France proceed in the prosperous course wherein she had already advanced so far; and he promised the monarch, if he would but fly the false and fatal seductions of military ambition, to render him the richest and most powerful king that ever reigned over a happy and abundant land. Turenne, on the other hand, urged upon the attention of the monarch that France was already an object of jealousy to many of the neighbouring states, and that any ambitious attack which would bring his dominions immediately in contact with Germany on the one side and Holland on the other would instantly awaken the apprehensions of those countries, and that a league might be formed against France which would add to the forces of the province he was about to assail those of several other states then friendly to France. He showed to Louis that by extending his frontier he only multiplied his enemies; and he declared that, however just might be his sovereign's claim, he would be the last to advise him to pursue it when he felt sure that it was likely to be ruinous to the best interests of France, both external and internal.

That Colbert should desire peace Louis could very

well understand; for the honour of that minister, the success of his favourite plans, and the preservation of that system which he had established, depended greatly upon the maintenance of external and internal tranquillity: but that Turenne, whose harvest was in the battle-field, whose first aspirations had been those of a soldier, and all whose habits and interests led him to advocate war, should in the present instance raise his voice so strongly in favour of peace, was sufficient to make Louis hesitate. He remained for some time in suspense, it would seem; and we are told that it was a skilful manœuvre of Louvois, acting upon some of the monarch's weaknesses, through the very means which Turenne had placed in his hands, that decided the question between peace and war, and hurried on Louis into that fatal course which he never ceased to pursue through the rest of his life, and which brought down ruin and destruction upon his country, and long ages of misery and suffering on his people.

When Turenne had been required to give in memorials upon the better regulation of the French service, he had amongst other things suggested that in time of peace regular encampments should be formed, for the purpose of keeping up the military spirit and habits of the soldiery. This had accordingly been done upon a very extensive scale, and with the most beneficial effect; and to one of these peaceful camps Louvois led the monarch for the purpose, as he said, of showing the happy results of Turenne's system, but in reality with a view of thwarting Turenne's best views. The pomp, the pageantry, and the military display, caught the splendour-loving eyes of Louis: the counsels of Colbert, the warnings of Turenne, were equally forgotten; and war was determined on when peace was absolutely necessary to the prosperity of France. The orders of the monarch were given; and his determination having once been taken and publicly announced, Colbert and Turenne united to do every thing in their power in order to secure an advantageous result to those schemes which

they had opposed while opposition was likely to be available.

It was now that the splendid talents of Louvois for the first time fully displayed themselves; and the great genius which he showed for the administration of an army, as well as the extraordinary powers which he brought to bear upon the supply of every sort of requisite for an extensive campaign, carried on by several large bodies of men, in some degree justified the eagerness which he evinced to employ in the service of the king those great abilities with which nature had endowed him. On every point of the frontier vast magazines were established, and supplied with the means of extending themselves, by branches, into the country about to be invaded. Wherever the king led his forces provisions of every kind were found ready: the marches of the troops and their quarters were all prepared and regulated in a way which, until the time of Louvois, had never been practised; and the great facilities which were thus afforded to the military proceedings of Louis and his generals insured rapid success to a campaign conducted under the eye of Turenne. The most successful, the most advantageous, and the most easy military expedition which the history of modern warfare could then display, was that which Louis XIV. carried on against Flanders in the year 1667. Colbert supplied the means in abundance; Louvois distributed them with skill and judgment; Louis animated his soldiers by his presence, and Turenne directed their efforts with consummate military ability. As we have shown before, in the life of Colbert, an extraordinary number of fortified cities, and a large tract of valuable country, were conquered in less than three months; and Louis returned to Paris after a campaign glorious and advantageous, but which had done one vast evil to France,—that of confirming her monarch in a taste for military glory.

Had Louvois restrained himself to the sphere of his official functions, had he been contented to show himself

a great minister, and to surpass the expectations which any one had conceived of his genius, that genius would have appeared in much brighter colours. But in the campaign of Flanders, as throughout the whole of his life, he showed a presuming and dictatorial spirit, which, though long concealed carefully from the eyes of the king, was irritating to all the inferior officers of the army, and insupportable to those of a higher grade. Even Turenne himself, the greatest master of his art in Europe, could not escape from the intrusive impertinence of Louvois; who sought to direct the proceedings of the general under the very eyes of the king. Turenne, moderate by nature, bore for some time the insolence of the upstart minister with patience and contempt; but at length even the temper of Turenne gave way, and he openly treated Louvois with that scorn and reprehension which his presumption merited. The pride of the son of Le Tellier was of the most irritable and vengeful nature; and, not daring to assail Turenne openly in the mind of his master, he determined to raise up against him a rival, who might share, if not eclipse, his military glory. That rival was Condé, who since his restoration to his native country, by the treaty of the Pyrenees, had lived in profound retirement, avoiding all those intrigues from which he had suffered so bitterly during the earlier years of his life. With him Louvois opened a communication immediately after the campaign in Flanders; and we are led to believe that he gave Condé to understand that any brilliant scheme suggested by himself, for some new military attempt, would be followed by his being intrusted with the execution thereof.

Though Condé had disdained to make use of either solicitations or intrigues, for the purpose of obtaining that command in the king's armies to which his rank, his genius, and his renown gave him a right to aspire, but from which he had been justly excluded by the consequences of his own rebellion, he had not the less beheld with pain the fresh glory acquired by

Turenne, of whom, indeed, he was not jealous, though he might be envious of the advantages he possessed. He eagerly, therefore, seized the hint of Louvois; and his fertile mind was not long in discovering an enterprise as brilliant as the expedition to Flanders, likely to be less costly and to be fully as easy. We have already noticed the conquest of Franche Comté, which district was constantly under the eyes of Condé as governor of Burgundy, who knew all its resources and its weaknesses, and could point out at once the means by which he proposed to annex it to that territory of which it seemed geographically to form a necessary part.

This enterprise was suggested by him to Louvois, in the early part of the year 1667, and eagerly fixed upon by the minister as the means of restoring Condé to the service of his master, of mortifying Turenne, and of distinguishing himself. In the first instance, while troops were collecting in Burgundy for the invasion of Franche Comté, the war of corruption was carried on by Louvois amongst its magistrates and its rulers: a number were found ready to sell themselves at a low price, and a sufficient body were bought to divide the country into factions, and render it an easy prey. In the midst of winter Condé set out at the head of an army of 20,000 men, and pouring straight into the heart of Franche Comté, laid siege to Besançon, which fell with scarcely the resistance of a day. Salins was also taken; and Louvois, who had hurried forward in person to sustain the prince by every means in his power, proceeded in haste to Dijon, where Louis XIV. had just arrived. The minister now, in accordance with a plan concerted with Condé, informed the monarch of the fall of those two cities, beseeching him to advance in person and lay siege to Dole. That town surrendered after a few days' siege; and in less than three weeks from the commencement of the invasion the whole of the county had been subdued.

Negotiations, forced upon Louis by the triple alliance, succeeded, and a peace was concluded under the media-

tion of several foreign powers; amongst which Holland distinguished itself less by skilful diplomacy than by the haughty and overbearing tone which its ambassador thought fit to employ towards the French monarch. Franche Comté was surrendered as a peace offering: but the designs of Louis, under the skilful prompting of Louvois, were extending themselves every day; and his determination of attacking Holland soon began to make itself manifest to all the surrounding nations. Louvois found means, however, to quiet their apprehensions with regard to themselves, and to lull them into a state of apathy respecting Holland; and as soon as he perceived that nothing was to be apprehended from Spain or the empire, he commenced his military preparations, pursuing the same system which he had done in regard to Flanders. He was most anxious to push his magazines as far forward as possible before war was actually declared; and for that purpose he entered into a treaty both with the bishop of Munster and the elector of Cologne. The latter, with some difficulty and at a great expense of money, was induced to grant two towns upon the very frontiers of Holland as French depôts; and here, with his usual prudence and foresight, Louvois established those magazines which enabled Louis XIV. to march forward to the conquest of Holland as if advancing on a party of pleasure.

The operations in that country have been already detailed as far as is necessary; and it only remains for me to mark the share which Louvois took therein. Condé and Turenne vied with each other, under the eyes of the king; and Louvois, all activity and diligence, was constantly with one or other of the armies, assuring himself with his own eyes that nothing was wanting to the supply of each; and that no deficiency which could be attributed to him existed to impede the progress of his sovereign's arms. The extraordinary and enterprising diligence which he displayed gave occasion to a report, for which there seems to have been no foundation, that Louvois himself preceded in disguise the army of the

king, and bought from the Dutch the very stores and ammunition which supplied the force that was advancing to conquer the country. That Louvois undertook such an unnecessary risk is not only incredible, but is sustained by nothing but rumour. But though we may well believe that he himself did not venture into Holland in disguise, which would have subjected him to be hung, wherever he was caught; yet there can be no earthly doubt that he did buy, by means of his secret agents, a very great part of the stores and ammunition which were absolutely necessary to the defence of Holland, but which were employed by the armies of Louis XIV. against that country.

One of the greatest qualities of a king, one the most useful to his people and the most serviceable to his own reputation, is the discrimination of talents in other men, and the just appreciation of their services. Such also was one of the principal features in the mind of Louis XIV.; and the spirit of enterprise, regularity, and order which distinguished Louvois, raised him every day higher and higher in the esteem of his master. Nor was this the only quality which attracted the king's attention during the campaigns in Flanders and in Holland. An eager desire of giving information in every branch of those sciences which were connected with his official station displayed itself in all his proceedings; and he induced the famous Vauban to reduce his system of attack and defence to a regular form, and commit it to writing, for his instruction. The same desire showed itself on many other occasions, leading him frequently into situations of great peril, for the sole purpose of acquiring knowledge. When any fortress was attacked, he was seen in every part of the trenches eagerly questioning the engineers: he watched from the most exposed situations all the proceedings of the army, and he descended into the most advanced part of the mines when prepared for the work of destruction.

All this was marked and approved by the king;

but the influence he thus obtained, as well as the information he thus acquired, his arrogant vanity led him to misuse, in endeavouring to control those persons who had made the sciences, of which he gained a superficial knowledge, the study and occupation of their whole lives. In entering Holland, Louis found no forces to oppose him, and but little resistance from the numerous strong places which might have been held out by native troops for an indefinite length of time. More than forty of these fell into his hands with very little opposition: and it became a question in the king's council what plan was to be pursued in regard to them. The ardent and fiery Condé, whose eagle glance seemed by intuition to discover in a moment the right course of proceeding, either in a campaign or a battle, and the calm and deliberate Turenne, whose clear cool judgment and scientific knowledge enabled him almost always to work out his own plans against the most skilful operations of an enemy, united in advising Louis to dismantle the greater part of the fortresses as he took them, and, holding only the commanding points, to keep his forces free to act efficiently in the field. Louvois, however, opposed himself to this judicious advice, and gave to Louis that counsel which placed much greater patronage and influence in the hands of the minister-at-war, and at the same time flattered the vanity of the monarch by the retention of an immense number of captured cities.

Louis took the advice of his minister in preference to that of the two greatest generals of the age, and for some time he was flattered by continual success. But ere long, he saw the pride and haughtiness of Louvois, joined to the insolent tyranny of his own demands, drive the depressed people of Holland to that pitch of despair where energy and courage become a necessity. The army of the king was within a few leagues of Amsterdam; disunion reigned in the capital of the republic; forces were wanting to oppose the victorious enemy; and deputies were sent to demand peace. Three several times Louvois is

reported to have made them return ere he would see them; and then, after treating them with scorn and indignity, he proposed to them in his own insolent language the imperious demands of his haughty master. The Dutch were roused to energetic resistance; the armies of Louis, reduced by the detachment of large garrisons, were unable to crush that resistance at once; the formidable coalition which Turenne had foreseen, and which Louvois had contemned, was formed against Louis amongst the other sovereigns of Europe; and the French monarch returned to Paris, leaving Condé and Turenne to retrieve, as well as they could, the errors which he had committed by the advice of his minister.

Shortly after, the imperial armies took the field, and Turenne was obliged to separate from Condé, in order to make head against the imperialists in the east. He did not do so, however, without uttering loud complaints against Louvois, who left him exposed to the whole forces of Germany, with a very inferior army indeed, while the troops which would have ensured him success in his operations were confined in a number of insignificant and untenable places in the most unhealthy country in Europe. Turenne, however, hastened towards Philipsburg, which was menaced by the imperial forces under Montecuculi, demanding from Louvois speedy reinforcements, in order to enable him to keep the field, both against that great general and the elector of Brandenburg, who had taken up arms a second time in opposition to France. Louvois, whose hatred of Turenne was of that blind and persevering nature which made him risk the safety of his country, and even the favour of his king, rather than not gratify his malevolence, refused or neglected to send the necessary troops; and Turenne was obliged to retreat, leaving the road open for the imperial general to join the prince of Orange, and capture Bonne in conjunction with that commander.

Not content with the negligence or injustice of this conduct, Louvois loudly blamed the French marshal

for the loss of Bonne; and Turenne, in concert with Condé, determined to lay before the king a statement of their grievances, and, pointing out to the monarch the evil consequences which had already accrued from the misconduct and bad advice of Louvois, to beseech his majesty to ensure them against his influence for the future. How far they had executed their determination does not appear when it became sufficiently manifest to alarm both Louvois and his father Le Tellier. The latter, long skilled in intrigue, negotiation, and persuasion, undertook to mollify the resentment of the two generals. He accordingly hastened to see Condé and Turenne; and while he admitted that they were right in all their views, that his son had been mistaken, and that part of the reverses which had occurred were to be attributed to him, he nevertheless endeavoured to show that the multitude and difficulty of the affairs in which he was engaged had prevented him from giving that attention to their demands and representations which he otherwise would have done; and that the greater part of his errors proceeded rather from accidental circumstances than from negligence or regard to the desires of either, or from any purpose of personally injuring Turenne. In respect to the latter point, Le Tellier urged, and with truth, that Louvois had ordered the siege of Trèves to be undertaken, for the purpose of causing a diversion in favour of that great general; and that although this scheme had been without the effect he desired, the attempt was sufficient to exculpate him from any design against the reputation of Turenne.

With Condé, to whom the minister had always shown himself well disposed, these arguments were effectual; but Turenne remained unmoved, and made his formal remonstrance to the king: he acknowledged that Louvois possessed great talents, zeal, activity, skill, order, and perseverance; and that if he would but confine himself to the duties of his office, he would be a most excellent and serviceable minister; but he accused him of meddling with matters totally out of his department, and

of giving no attention to the demands and representations of those who were carrying on the war. Whether in the course of this accusation Turenne displayed any undue degree of heat, or whether Louis did not choose to cool the zeal of a minister he esteemed by reproof, does not appear; but certain it is, that he paid less attention to the remonstrance of Turenne than might have been expected. Frightened, however, by the risk that he had run, Louvois changed his conduct towards Turenne, taking care for the future to attend to his demands, although he more than once endeavoured to control his movements. A variety of operations then took place, in the course of which were executed the brutal and horrible ravages committed in the palatinate by the French troops under Turenne; ravages which caused the name of a Frenchman to be execrated in that country for many years after the generation which suffered by them had passed away. The blame of those proceedings naturally fell upon Turenne; but those who would defend him attribute the massacres and pillage which took place in that rich and beautiful country to the strict orders of Louvois, and point to all the rest of Turenne's conduct in proof of his being incapable of committing such crimes, except under the commands of one whom he was forced to obey. Forced at length to recross the Rhine, the French general retreated towards Alsace. But Louvois seeing the French frontier menaced on the side of Lorraine, by an army of 70,000 men, despatched pressing orders to Turenne to seize upon the passes of Lorraine, and there hold the enemy at bay. Turenne, however, refused, giving Louvois to understand that he would conduct the campaign upon his own views, and not upon those of a civilian at a distance from the spot. Louvois still pressed his orders; and Turenne wrote to the king himself, setting forth his purposes and designs, and once more remonstrating strongly against the interference of the minister. In the meantime he pursued his own purposes, in spite of all opposition, and with an army of 20,000 men

maintained Alsace against the whole forces of the Empire; harassed them in all their proceedings, defeated them in detail, and at length forced them to evacuate the country and retreat across the Rhine.

While such were the proceedings upon the Rhine, Louis XIV. had once more invaded Franche Comté; and by the excellent arrangements of Louvois, as well as the ready promptitude of Colbert in supplying him with the immense funds which he required, the whole of that desirable territory was again annexed to France. By this time, however, the finances of the state were exhausted; all that Colbert had done to restore the prosperity of France was undone by the effects of a long and ruinous war; and Louis began to feel most painfully that in refusing his attention to that great minister, and giving ear to the persuasions of Louvois, he had rejected the better counsel and chosen the worse. However, about this time, a conspiracy was detected by Louvois and Le Tellier, which, though contemptible in itself, served by its exposure, and the punishment of the conspirators, to restore any influence which those two ministers might have lost by the evils which had fallen upon their country in consequence of the advice they had given.

A discontented officer of the name of Traumont had been gained by the Dutch; and, seeing that a great part of the French provinces were in a state of severe irritation and discontent, in consequence of the new imposts with which they were charged, he conceived the design of creating an insurrection in Normandy. He communicated his purpose to a young gentleman of that province descended from the illustrious house of Rohan, but who had squandered his fortune and impaired his credit by gross and constant debauchery; and had at the same time given umbrage to the court by his turbulent proceedings, and quarrelled with his family on account of his libertine course of life. Talented, handsome, and brave, he still retained some authority in Normandy, especially through female influence; and

listening eagerly to the suggestions of Traumont, he hoped to recover his exhausted fortunes, by allying himself to the Dutch and the Spaniards. Every thing was prepared to give effect to the plans that had been laid, and Traumont had gone down himself into Normandy for the purpose of directing the meditated insurrection, when a woman of rank, the mistress of his nephew, who was implicated in the transaction, suffered the secret to escape her, and it soon reached the ears of Louvois. Traumont and the chevalier de Rohan were immediately arrested, but the former shot himself ere he was removed from Rouen; and after his death, no witnesses existing against the latter, he might have escaped punishment. One of his judges, however, named Bezons — a name for ever infamous — drew from him, by promises of pardon, a confession of his error, on which he was condemned and executed without mercy.

During the whole course of the campaigns which followed the outbreaking of the war with Holland, Louvois had applied himself to perfect the discipline of the French armies; and a severe and iron rule was introduced by the famous officer Martinet, which gained for his name the unenvied and unmerited distinction of being applied ever afterwards to a military tyrant. Louvois himself showed on all occasions that haughty severity which might be expected from his character; and an instance of his rigid and unjust sternness, which took place about this time, tended to render him odious in the French service. A gallant officer of the name of Dupas had been entrusted with the government of Naerden, which was besieged in 1673 by the prince of Orange. He held out for four days, though the place was scarcely defensible, and only surrendered after having sustained an assault of five hours, without the hope of succour from without. It appears that by some old rule of the service, the governors of fortresses were bound to sustain three assaults before they surrendered; and Louis XIV., by the advice of Louvois, condemned the unfortunate Dupas to be drawn into the town of Utrecht with a

shovel in his hand, and to have his sword broken in the market-place. Insulted and injured, Dupas marked his time, volunteered on an occasion where an extraordinary display of courage might make itself remarked, and was killed at the siege of Grâve, showing from the first his determination never to return alive.

His death probably had but little effect upon the hard-hearted and arrogant Louvois; and the fall of Turenne himself, which occurred the year after that of Dupas, and which was a loss to the whole nation, was only a relief to the minister. He is even accused, as well as his brother the archbishop of Rheims, of indecently testifying undisguised satisfaction at the death of a man for whom all France was in tears. After the decease of Turenne, Condé seemed to be the whole hope of France; and Louvois, no longer blinded by his hatred of the former gallant officer, reinforced considerably the army which he had commanded in opposition to Montecuculi, requesting the prince to put himself at its head. Condé speedily obliged the German forces to cross the Rhine; and while the king in person, accompanied by Louvois and Vauban, made himself master of several towns in Belgium, Condé carried the war into the enemies' country, and delivered France from the presence of her enemies. The constant state of preparation in which the skill of Louvois kept the commissariat facilitated every operation of Louis; and to that may doubtless be as much attributed his great success, as to the skill of the generals who commanded under him. In the siege of Valenciennes, the schemes of Louvois were again opposed to those of a master in the art of war; and he sustained a contrary opinion to that of Vauban. In this instance he was supported by five French marshals, but Louis was wise enough to follow the directions of the greatest engineer of the age; and the works of Valenciennes were attacked and taken in open day. A number of other towns, Ghent, St. Omer, and Cambray, were added to the conquests of France; but although she acquired much glory by the gallant manner in which she sustained herself against

the formidable coalition by which she was attacked, and gained daily some fresh advantage over her enemies, yet the exhausted state of her finances, and the murmurs of her people against the severe imposts under which they laboured, induced Louis sincerely to seek for peace. Louvois did all that he could to prolong the war; but strong necessity seconded the earnest and repeated remonstrances of Colbert, and the treaty of Nimeguen restored a certain degree of tranquillity to Europe.

If the resources of Louis were exhausted by the long and severe struggle which followed his attack upon Holland, the other monarchs of Europe were not less weary of war; nor were their subjects less desirous of peace than his. The treaty of Nimeguen, therefore, left France in possession of many rich provinces as the fruit of Louis's efforts; and Louvois had the satisfaction of seeing the counsels he had given, however detrimental to France in a reasonable point of view, productive of that false and unsubstantial success which is usually looked upon as glory. Standing high, therefore, in the favour of his master, he feared nothing but the rivalry of Colbert, whose more vast and comprehensive mind still found that degree of support in the better qualities of Louis XIV., which enabled him to maintain his ground against the influence which Louvois had founded on the monarch's weaknesses.

Colbert had been the friend and counsellor of the beautiful and unhappy La Vallière; but although that was an age in which the royal favour was but too often affected by the will of woman, Colbert had never depended upon the smiles of the first and purest of Louis's concubines. Louvois, however, attached himself strongly to her successful rival, the bold, harsh Montespan; and in all the intrigues and changes of the court we find his name joined with the party which she headed. Even at that early period, when her connection with the monarch was yet covered by the thin veil of outward decency, we find Louvois acting with the rising favourite in the disgraceful proceedings regarding

the count de Lauzun. That unfortunate nobleman, after having for several years enjoyed the favour of the king in a very high degree, had engaged the affection of the monarch's first cousin, the duchess of Montpensier, commonly called Mademoiselle; and employing all his own influence over the king's mind, and the interest of a host of noble friends, he had obtained permission publicly to wed the princess, whose love he had obtained. Several branches of the royal family, however, even after the permission had been granted, joined together to oppose the marriage; and madame de Montespan, together with Louvois, joined themselves strongly to the adversaries of the count. By their representations and suggestions, Louis was induced weakly to withdraw the sanction he had given, to forbid the marriage, and to treat coldly the man he had injured. The count de Lauzun is said in the heat of passion to have forgotten the respect he owed his sovereign; but Louis, who was not vindictive, easily pardoned that offence, and it was not till he raised his voice against Louvois, that any severity followed the indiscretion of the disappointed noble. The arrogant and revengeful minister, however, and the proud and daring mistress, were assailed somewhat intemperately by the count de Lauzun and his friends; and while Lauzun was arrested and subjected to a ten years' imprisonment, the marshal duke of Luxembourg, one of his most zealous supporters, was marked by the eye of Louvois for future persecution.

The opportunity was not long ere it presented itself; and although Voltaire has not remarked the first cause of Louvois' hatred to the duke of Luxembourg, yet his account of the events in which that hatred displayed itself is so concise and accurate that we shall give it very nearly in his own words, adding merely from an older record some of the circumstances which he has omitted. Two Italians, one of whom was named Exili, had laboured long, in conjunction with a German called Glaser, in search of the philosopher's stone. The two Italians thus lost the little that they possessed; and endeavouring

by crime to repair the effects of their folly, they proceeded to the secret sale of poisons. The custom of oral confession brought to the ears of the grand penitentiary of Paris the fact that several persons had died by poison; and he found himself called upon to give information thereof to the government. Other circumstances pointed suspicion to the two Italians, and they were arrested and cast into the Bastille, where one of them soon died. The other, called Exili, could not be convicted, but was still detained. Some short time afterwards, a young officer named St. Croix was arrested at the solicitation of the * civil lieutenant d'Aubrai, in consequence of an intrigue with his daughter, the wife of the marquis of Brinvilliers, and was unfortunately confined in the same room with the Italian. Exili heard the story of St. Croix, and by his intervention opened a communication with the young marchioness, a woman of violent passions, who instantly took advantage of the criminal knowledge of Exili, to avenge herself upon those who had checked her intercourse with St. Croix. Her father, her two brothers, and her sister, all died by poison; and the crime having been discovered and proved, she was publicly executed, and her body burnt.

This example, however, did not deter others from following in the same course of cowardly crime. Three persons, a priest named Le Sage, and two others called La Voisin and La Vigoureux, practised upon the credulity of the Parisians in the character of sorcerers, and, to the evil-disposed, supplied the fearful means of ridding themselves of enemies or too long-lived friends. The deaths by poison became frequent; the cases of suspicion many; and some energetic measures became necessary to guard against a means of assassination so subtle, and so easily concealed. Although certainly not within his official sphere, this subject was eagerly taken up by Louvois; but it was remarked that a great many

* Voltaire writes civil lieutenant; but Auvigny and others call him the criminal lieutenant.

persons accused or suspected of trafficking with Le Sage and his companions were those who, on various occasions, had dared to raise their voice against the minister. A special tribunal, called the *chambre ardente*, was appointed to sit at the arsenal for the purpose of investigating this fearful affair alone; and a number of the highest persons in Paris, both by rank and talent, were cited to appear before this court. Amongst others, two nieces of cardinal Mazarin were cited—the duchess of Bouillon, and the countess of Soissons, mother of the famous prince Eugene. The duchess of Bouillon was merely commanded to appear personally, and was only accused of a ridiculous sort of curiosity, ordinary enough at that time, but which was never within the cognisance of justice.

The old habits of consulting diviners, drawing horoscopes, and seeking charms to make oneself beloved, existed still amongst the people, and even amongst the greatest of the land. At the birth of Louis XIV., an astrologer named Morin had been brought into the very chamber of the queen-mother, to draw the horoscope of the heir to the crown. Even the regent duke of Orleans was not a little interested in that species of quackery which seduced all antiquity; and not the philosophy of the famous count of Boulainvilliers himself could cure him of entertaining this chimera. It was very excusable, then, in the duchess of Bouillon, and in all the ladies who yielded to the same weakness. The priest Le Sage, La Voisin, and La Vigoreux, had created for themselves a considerable revenue out of the curiosity of the ignorant, who were in great numbers. They foretold the future; they caused the devil to appear; and if they had kept to that, there would have been nothing but absurdity, both in them and in the *chambre ardente*. The duchess of Bouillon had nothing to reproach herself with but the idle curiosity of seeking to know the future; and expected, perhaps, at first some little favour at the hands of a monarch who had so long owned the guidance of her uncle, and had shown

some degree of tenderness both for herself and for her sister. She was an enemy, however, of Louvois; and that minister was determined to mortify her if he could not effect her downfall. The proceedings against her were continued before the *chambre ardente*, and she was forced to appear and submit to interrogation; but when she did appear, she was surrounded by a multitude of the most distinguished and powerful nobles of France; and it very soon became evident that there was no just ground whatsoever for any criminal accusation against her. The interrogatory turned almost entirely upon questions equally pitiful and absurd; and it terminated with a severe answer made by the duchess to La Reynie, a councillor of state, who had been appointed one of the judges of that court, and was foolish enough to ask madame de Bouillon if she had really seen the devil. She instantly replied that she saw him at that moment, that he was very ugly and frightful, and that he was disguised as a councillor of state.

No more questions were asked, and the duchess was acquitted: but the enmity of Louvois paused not there. He represented to Louis that the manner in which the duchess had appeared before the *chambre ardente*, and the brilliant train which she had brought with her, was an insult to his authority; and though found innocent by her judges, she was ordered to quit Paris for having taken the best means of making that innocence available. The accusation against the countess of Soissons was more serious and better supported; and Louis notified to her, that if she felt herself culpable he advised her to retire from France before her guilt was legally proved, as neither his former partiality for her house, nor her alliance with the royal family, would shield her from the sword of justice. She replied, that she was perfectly innocent, but that she did not choose to be interrogated by a court of justice; and she ultimately fled from France, misfortune pursuing her footsteps, and affecting not only herself, but those who befriended her also.

The most important personage, however, who was cited before this extraordinary tribunal, and who in a former age would undoubtedly have fallen a sacrifice to the enmity of those who called him there, was François Henri de Montmorenci, duke of Luxembourg, marshal of France; and the proceedings against him were carried on with a degree of virulence which caused Louvois to be strongly suspected, not only of urging on the court, but of prompting the witnesses. It appeared, indeed, that one of the duke's men of business, named Bonard, having lost some important papers belonging to his master, had the weakness to consult the priest Le Sage, for the purpose of recovering them. Le Sage directed him to confess, and to go for nine days running to three different churches, in which he was to repeat three particular psalms. In spite of the psalms and the confession, the papers did not make their appearance; but it being discovered that they were in the hands of a girl named Dupin, Bonard was induced by Le Sage to perform, in the name of the duke of Luxembourg, a sort of conjuration, for the purpose of forcing Dupin by magical means to restore the papers. The girl, however, did not restore them; and in order to proceed still more severely against her, Bonard obtained from the duke full powers of attorney, signed by himself, which were produced in court. Between the body of the document and the signature, however, were found two lines, by which the marshal in good set form made himself over to the devil. It so happened, fortunately for him, that these two lines were in a totally different handwriting from the rest of the instrument, which without them was perfectly innocent and perfectly rational. But the prisoner Le Sage being brought forward to give evidence against the duke, declared that Luxembourg had made this application to Satan for the purpose of destroying the girl Dupin, who would not give up the papers. The other astrologers corroborated this testimony; and added, that by his order they had

assassinated Dupin, had cut her in quarters, and thrown her into the river.

In the meanwhile, the duke of Luxembourg had voluntarily proceeded to the Bastille and surrendered himself; but this confidence in his own innocence did not save him from the persecution of Louvois, who had never forgotten the support which the duke had given to the count de Lauzun, and who now caused him to be placed in a dungeon of the foulest description, only six feet and a half long, where, after his first interrogatory, he was left for five weeks, without the trial being proceeded in. Debarred the use of materials for writing, the duke demanded permission of his gaolers to send a letter of complaint to Louvois, on the cruel injustice of protracting the trial*; but the means were refused him, though the request was communicated to the minister. At length he was again brought before the court, and he was asked if he had not given bottles of poisoned wine, in order to kill the brother of Dupin, and a mistress whom that brother kept in Paris; and in the end they confronted with him Le Sage and some other witnesses, who accused him of having endeavoured, by sorcery, to destroy several persons, whom they named. Amongst other things with which he was charged, was, that he had entered into a compact with the devil, to bring about a marriage between his son and the daughter of Louvois. But, on hearing this accusation, the duke replied, looking back indignantly to his own ancestors and those of the minister, "When Matthew of Montmorenci married the widow of Louis de Gros he did not address himself to the devil, but to the States-General, which declared, that to gain for the king, then a minor, the support of Montmorenci, this marriage ought to take place."

During fourteen months the trial was protracted, and the confinement of his dungeon had nearly terminated the life of the duke of Luxembourg, who fell ill in the midst of the proceedings. Nothing, however, could ultimately be proved against him, except that he had once

seen the priest Le Sage, and had the weakness to ask him to draw the horoscopes of various persons, for the satisfaction of an idle curiosity. As far as regarded him, the trial was left incomplete, no sentence having ever been pronounced. But he was at length set at liberty; and while the poisoners and their accomplices were burnt in the Place de Grève, Luxembourg retired for a time to the country, and then re-appeared at the court, where the king never spoke with him upon the past, but showed no diminution of favour or esteem. Of Louvois the duke took no notice, but he solicited no employment; and after a time, the conviction of his merit as an officer, and his innocence as a man, induced Louis once more to put him at the head of his armies, where dignified integrity and signal services put those enemies to shame who had sought to work the downfall of an innocent and upright man.

One of the strongest proofs of the unimpeachable integrity and wisdom of Colbert is, that Louvois, during the whole course of his life, could not find or forge an accusation against him. It was only when Louis was absent from his greater minister that Louvois obtained full power over his mind; it was only by using the monarch's weaknesses that he could successfully oppose Colbert. It would be tedious to point out all that he did, after the conclusion of the peace, to irritate and mortify that great statesman; and it may be only necessary to dwell upon those actions to which he was led for the purpose of perpetuating his own influence and gratifying his own ambition, as well as for that of opposing the rival minister, of whom his hatred was not less than his jealousy.

The time of peace was, to Louvois, a time of inactivity and danger. He feared that his services should be forgotten, his talents overlooked; and he scarcely suffered France to obtain a moment's repose ere he laboured assiduously to give cause for the surrounding nations once more to declare war. One of the first acts which followed the peace of Nimeguen was

the establishment of a commission at Metz, and another at Brissac, for the purpose of inquiring into old and vexatious claims upon territories adjacent to Alsace, and which were asserted to have been dismembered from that province. A thousand acts of injustice resulted from these commissions, which threw the whole German empire into commotion. But the long and desolating war which had so lately afflicted Europe, terrified the Germanic body from asserting its just rights with vigour, and France remained in possession of that which she had so wrongly acquired.

The next step of Louvois was to attack a city which had always been favourable to the enemies of France, which they had carefully guarded as the key to Alsace and Lorraine, and to which the late treaties gave Louis no claim whatever. This was the city of Strasbourg, which had maintained a sort of tacit independence, as a free city, commanding the Rhine by its bridge of boats; formidable to the contending parties who had lately agitated Europe, by its magnificent arsenal and warlike population; and holding a high station in the consideration of surrounding states, by the freedom of its institutions, its wealth, its commerce, and its industry. During the last war, Strasbourg had affected to hold an armed neutrality; but forming, as it really did, a part of the Germanic confederation, it had of course shown a degree of favour toward the enemies of France which neither Louis nor his minister was likely to forgive; and it would seem that, from the very moment peace was signed, Louvois had determined upon the scandalous infraction of all good faith which he afterwards executed in the attack upon Strasbourg. His first proceedings were to gain, by every means of corruption and bribery, a number of the principal persons in the town, and a great part of the magistrates of the city. The bishop was already in the interest of France, and by his means many influential citizens were brought over.

Nevertheless, the attempt to obtain possession of the

place was by no means without difficulty or danger. The great bulk of the inhabitants were German in all their feelings and connections: the whole of the Germanic confederation was interested in preventing that city falling into the hands of France. It was strongly fortified, well garrisoned and provided; and while no chance existed of obtaining a voluntary surrender of its freedom, a thousand obstacles still lay in the way of any violent attempt upon its liberties. All these considerations, however, did not deter Louvois, whose precautions and arrangements in regard to the capture of Strasbourg, which was left entirely to his own skill, display his sagacity, energy, and administrative talent, more than perhaps any of his former acts, which are generally found complicated with those of others. At the conclusion of the treaty of Nimeguen, a part of the French forces, which had defended Alsace and Lorraine against the imperialists, were withdrawn with great pomp and ostentation, as if France, perfectly determined upon maintaining peace, proposed to reduce all her military establishments. Nevertheless a great number of soldiers, far greater indeed than was necessary to garrison the conquered towns, remained in those provinces, and were employed in slowly repairing the fortifications. They were disposed, however, in such a manner that, without depriving any fortress of its regular garrison, these detached bodies could form their junction at a particular point, on a few days' notice, and that point was in the immediate vicinity of Strasbourg. An army of 14,000 men was thus held in readiness to seize a favourable opportunity; and while waiting the event, instead of supplying the forces by means of magazines, which might have excited suspicion, Louvois caused provisions to be conveyed to them by small portions at a time, covering his measures in this respect by the pretence of sending arms and ammunition to the fortresses. Notwithstanding all these precautions, some degree of jealousy was excited, and, to meet it, the minister spread the report that France intended to detach a force into Savoy, which lulled the fears of the neighbouring states till all his preparations were completed.

At length, on the 28th of September, 1681, Louvois set out from Paris, accompanied by a number of young officers, but no troops; and, travelling night and day, while the forces already prepared were concentrating upon Brissac, he arrived at that town just as their junction was effected, and immediately detached a body of picked men, who, with scarcely any resistance, made themselves masters of the different forts and outworks by which the city of Strasbourg was defended. In the meantime, he himself followed the baron de Monclar, who, with 12,000 men, approached the gates of the town, and threatened instantly to attack it if the inhabitants refused to surrender. The bishop and the magistrates, already gained by the money or the intrigues of France, took advantage of the consternation of the people, and persuaded all classes that nothing could save the town but an immediate treaty with Louis. This was accordingly entered into with Louvois, who was already at the gates; and, taking but the feeble assurance of a politician's promises for their maintenance in various privileges, they surrendered to the arms of France, and received a garrison of French troops.

One successful aggression is always followed by another: and while Louis was plundering the empire on the one hand, he demanded the town of Alost from the Spaniards on the other, which would have carried his power to the very gates of Ghent and of Brussels; and upon a denial of his right on this point, he blockaded the city of Luxembourg, which affected the safety both of Flanders and Holland. In the meantime, jealous of the re-establishment of the French marine by Colbert and his son, Louvois employed Vauban and a number of other skilful engineers in fortifying strongly all the principal towns which had fallen into the power of France. This was a much more justifiable manner of carrying on his rivalry than that which he pursued at the same time in the intrigues of the court. We have already noticed in the life of Colbert all the pangs which Louvois

inflicted upon him, by hurrying forward the king from one unjust and cruel step to another against his protestant subjects; and we must not pause upon the many rumours which attributed to the minister-at-war secret machinations, of the most base and ungenerous character, against the great and virtuous man whom he strove to supplant. It is sufficiently proved, however, that to ruin him, was the great occupation of Louvois during the years of unstable peace which succeeded the treaty of Nimeguen; at least if we may believe all contemporary reports. But death removed Colbert from his path in the year 1683; and Louis, who esteemed Louvois' great talents, and shut his eyes to his evil qualities, almost immediately appointed him to one of the posts held by his dead rival, — that of superintendent of public buildings.

No longer opposed by so strong an advocate of peace as Colbert, Louvois proceeded in his aggressions upon foreign states with more activity than ever, well assured that, whatever might be the result, his object would be answered, either by driving other countries to declare war, or by aggrandising his master at their expense. The policy of Louvois well accorded with Louis's own views; and, while he took possession of several towns in Flanders, attacked and captured Luxembourg, and seized upon and dismantled Treves, he pretended that he was solely fulfilling the treaty of Nimeguen, at the very moment that he was infringing all its provisions. It was in vain that other states remonstrated; it was in vain that they threatened: Louis went on from exaction to exaction, and from aggression to aggression. All the measures of Louvois were successful; and the embarrassments of the empire, the designs of the prince of Orange upon the throne of England, and the total exhaustion of Spain, prevented any vigorous measures from being taken in opposition; so that almost every remonstrance and every treaty ended by France being confirmed in the usurpations she had made.

Determined at length by the very reluctance of his ene-

mies to begin the war himself, nothing was wanting to Louis but a pretext, which, from the mild and timid resignation of his enemies, he had some difficulty in discovering. The death of the elector of Cologne, however, and also the death of the elector palatine, at length afforded him an assignable motive; and while the princes of Europe, seeing too late how his continual aggressions were likely to end, leagued together at Augsburg for the purpose of enforcing the treaties of Munster and Nimeguen, he caused his troops to march towards the Rhine, and, with more than 400,000 men in arms, prepared once more to call the united forces of all Europe upon France. Heidelburg and Mayence, Manheim, Spires, Treves, Worms, and many other cities of the Rhine, were captured with scarcely an effort. The French armies overran the whole palatinate; and an order was received by the generals there commanding, signed by the minister himself, to reduce every thing to ashes in the country through which they passed. The horrors that were now committed exceed all description. One of the finest countries in Europe was reduced to the condition of a desert; and all the neighbouring states, indignant at such a barbarous proceeding, prepared to make more vigorous efforts to punish one whose cruelty was equal to his ambition. Neither Louis nor his minister feared the coalition against them: the one, now given up to his pleasures, no longer examining the operations of his armies with his own eyes, had been taught to believe that nothing could resist his power; and the other, whose interest it was to keep France in a state of continual warfare, doubted not to obtain a sufficient portion of success to administer the necessary quantity of gratification to the vanity of his master, and to maintain his own station in the king's favour and councils. It is true that he had forgotten no measure of precaution to insure to France every advantage in her external operations, and to secure her against any attack upon her own territories. He had visited, inspected,

and prepared the fortresses of Alsace, Lorraine, and Flanders; he had given to the armies of the king a degree of discipline which they had never before known; he insured to them supplies by the establishment of immense magazines upon every point where they were likely to act; and he had provided, by numerous academies of cadets, for a constant succession of well-trained officers to counterbalance any loss in that branch of the service. War was at the same time declared with Holland and with England, which had just cast off the rule of James II., and was preparing for more vigorous efforts under William, the persevering enemy of France.

Notwithstanding the first successes of the French arms, a change soon took place in the current of fortune. On the 6th of September, Mayence was retaken by the imperial troops, and shortly after farther reverses followed. The city of Bonne sustained a siege of more than three months, but surrendered to the Germans after the death of the baron Asfeld; and in June, 1689, marshal Humieres, one of the favourites of Louvois, was completely defeated at Valcour, on the Sambre, by the prince of Waldec. At this period, the situation of Louvois was most critical: he was supported, indeed, by the old affection of the king; but almost all the great nobility of France, disgusted by his haughty insolence, viewed him with abhorrence. At the same time, he had lost the support of madame de Montespan, who was no longer in favour with the king; and the famous Maintenon, who had succeeded to the affections of the monarch, the friend of Colbert and the bitter enemy of Louvois, was day by day gaining greater influence over the mind of Louis. Her voice was not silent in opposition to Louvois; and when the defeat of Humieres at Valcour, and the surrender of Mayence by Uxelles, two creatures of Louvois, were known at the court, all men began to see that the first great change in the fortunes of the minister was beginning to take place.

Humieres, whose incapacity was well known, Louvois was forced to dismiss. This was a sufficient mortification in itself; but when the king, without consulting him, made choice of his persecuted enemy, the duke of Luxembourg, to supply the place of commander-in-chief of the armies in Flanders, left vacant by the dismissal of his favourite and friend, the disappointment of Louvois exceeded all bounds, and even injured his health. His hatred towards the duke of Luxembourg was not unknown to the king, who was aware that he could not trust to the upright integrity of his minister in this case, as he could have done with Colbert, to act straightforwardly with the general for the good of the state; and in giving the duke the command of his armies in Flanders, he addressed to him these remarkable words — "I promise you to take care that Louvois deals fairly with you; I will force him to sacrifice to the good of my service the hatred which he entertains towards you. You will correspond directly with myself. Your letters will not pass by his hands."

This was another great mortification to Louvois, who felt that his power over the mind of the king was gone: but the most painful circumstances of his situation proceeded in a very considerable degree from the consequences of the death of Colbert, who, while he existed upon earth, had been the object of his greatest hatred and envy. Had that great minister still been living — though he himself would doubtless have been unable to keep the finances of the state from falling into great embarrassments under the weight of such expensive wars — he would undoubtedly have obviated many of the difficulties under which the country laboured. He might, indeed, have been obliged to devise new imposts, to create new taxes, and to burden the people whom it had been his pride to relieve; but there can be little doubt that he would have found means to prevent the country from being reduced to absolute penury, and to enable the monarch to carry on or conclude the wars in which the am-

bition of others had plundged him, without having recourse to measures which exposed to all Europe the exhausted state of his finances. The immense armies, however, which Louis now kept on foot required immense supplies: the treasury was exhausted; the same spirit of order and economy no longer reigned in the finances; and yet Louis had neither the inclination to make peace at all, nor the power to make it on advantageous terms. Under these circumstances he commanded all the splendid silver plate, wrought upon the designs of the best artists in Europe, to be brought from Versailles and melted down: a number of princes and nobles followed his example, and an immense mass of precious metal was thus thrown into the circulation, which gave temporary relief to the state.

About the same time, the duke of Luxembourg defeated the prince of Waldec at Fleurus: but the victories of Luxembourg were painful to Louvois; and the haughty conduct of the minister towards the duke of Savoy afforded an excuse, if it did not act as a cause, both for the defection of that prince from the interests of France, and for his alliance with the members of the league of Augsburg. Louis, surprised and indignant, looked somewhat cold upon Louvois, of whose conduct the duke of Savoy loudly complained; and madame de Maintenon and her friends did not fail to press the proud minister eagerly towards the brink of a precipice over which he seemed likely to fall. Although it was a generous trait in the character of Louis to guard his mind carefully from yielding credit to the representations of any of his servants' enemies, and to distrust every complaint and insinuation which had the slightest appearance of originating in cabal; yet the frequent murmurs of his subjects, the outcry of all Europe, and the difficulties in which he himself was plunged, in consequence of the proceedings or counsels of Louvois, were not without effect upon the monarch. It is said indeed that Louvois, long accustomed to command, and irritated by his first disappointments, suffered his haughty and overbearing spirit to appear,

even in the presence of Louis, and gave his sovereign the strongest proof that many of the accusations which had been made against him were correct. It is not impossible, also, that Louis was fatigued with the ascendency which he had suffered his minister to gain over his mind, and had determined to shake off a species of influence which had thus become burdensome. The effects of that influence must long have been felt by the king of France: he could not but be sensible that, by following the interested counsels of Louvois, he had placed himself in a situation of danger and difficulty; he could not but be sensible that the atrocious cruelties committed by the command of the minister had made the monarch's name odious throughout Europe; he could not but be sensible that he had lost the love of his people, while he had incurred the hatred of every surrounding nation; he could not but be sensible that he had cast away vast opportunities of beneficence to seize, in place of the solid gold of peaceful tranquillity, the phantasm treasures of warlike ambition. And while he contemplated what he might have been, and what he was, it is not improbable that he found the cabalistic word, glory, to have lost its power of silencing the reproaches of conscience, while the voices of Colbert and Turenne spoke to him from the grave, and bade him look upon his ruined country and the world in arms against him. The result of such feelings could not be very favourable to him by whose advice all these things were done. But private motives, also, are said to have joined with public considerations in leading Louis to withdraw his favour from Louvois. That minister, though the secret enemy of madame de Maintenon, had, it is said, been the king's chief confidant in his private marriage with that extraordinary woman; and we are told, also, that Louis had pledged himself, when Louvois strongly opposed the unequal alliance, never to make it public. The time had now come, however, when the ascendency of madame de Maintenon over the mind of the king was greater than that of Louvois. Louis was inclined

to make the marriage public; his unacknowledged wife pressed him eagerly to do so; but his pledge to the minister stood in the way; and we have reason to believe that Louvois, in harsh and somewhat insolent language, reminded the king of the promise he had made.

Under such circumstances, with exhausted finances, with overpowering forces opposed to him in the field, with every European prince attributing their league against his sovereign to his misconduct, with the whole court inimical to him, and the confidence of his master gone, nothing could have saved Louvois but a current of vast and uninterrupted success. The least obstacle, the least defeat, was likely to produce his overthrow; and he felt that his fall must be as tremendous as the pinnacle on which he stood had been high. Danger, difficulty, anxiety, disappointment, weighed upon his spirits and injured his health; but still he continued to struggle, and, for a time, with great success. The maréchal de Catinat, in Italy, avenged him upon the duke of Savoy, whose towns fell one by one into the hands of France, and whose armies were defeated as often as they appeared. Luxembourg went on in his successful progress, triumphing over the united powers of Holland, Spain, and Germany. Mons surrendered to Louis himself, even in presence of a hostile army; and the balance of glory and victory was for some time on the side of France. Such a state, however, did not last long; the famous prince Eugène appeared in Italy, and checked the career of the French army in Savoy. William III. of England defeated James II. on the banks of the Boyne; and the French auxiliaries proved of no avail in supporting the weak monarch on the throne of Great Britain. Marlborough appeared in the Low Countries, and gave the first proofs of his great military genius; and William himself arriving in Holland took part in a general congress, in which all the great powers of Europe signed a solemn declaration never to make peace with Louis, till he had restored all that had been captured since the peace of Munster.

The cloud that threatened Louis himself, completely

overshadowed Louvois. The courtiers exerted themselves not to lose this favourable opportunity of overthrowing the obnoxious statesman; the representations of madame de Maintenon became more earnest and more frequent as she saw the best interests of her husband and her sovereign endangered by the conduct of her personal enemy; and Louis himself, mortified and repentant, prepared to dismiss from his councils a minister whose advice had produced such lamentable results, whose arrogance had left him not a friend, and whose temper had more than once been displayed even to the king himself. There can be little doubt that every thing was prepared for his dismissal, and that, while he was taking some mineral waters for the restoration of his health, agony of mind and apprehensions of coming disgrace were doing more to injure it than all that the greatest skill of man could remedy. On the morning of the 18th of July, 1691, he went, as usual, to transact the business of the state with the king. Some declare that he had actually received the king's commands to resign his office; and some, that the discussion between Louis and his minister had been carried on in terms of bitterness, which left the result as certain as if his dismissal had taken place. Others, however, declare that Louvois, humbled by various reverses, had spoken to the king in a tone of humility and grief, which had touched the more generous points in the nature of the monarch, and led him even to offer some words of consolation, in order to soothe the wounded spirit of his minister. I am inclined to believe that the latter statement is the most correct; for, though the words which Louis XIV. addressed to James II. on the death of Louvois, "I have lost a good minister, but neither your affairs nor mine shall go the worse for it," do not imply any very great regret, yet they would seem to show that at the moment of his death Louis had not fully made up his mind to the dismissal of his minister. Certain it is, however, that, in that conversation of the 18th of July, Louis perceived a sudden change come over the countenance of Louvois, and, comprehending that he was

taken ill, directed him to go home and obtain medical advice. Louvois immediately obeyed, and, on arriving at home, demanded a cup of water, which he drank: his surgeon, La Ligerie, was instantly sent for, and attempted to bleed him, but before that operation could afford him any relief the spirit was fled.

Thus died the marquis of Louvois, in the fifty-first year of his age: but the suddenness of his death caused a thousand wild and absurd reports to be spread concerning the circumstances which attended it. The report became general that he had been poisoned; and that this was not merely a popular rumour is proved by the fact of his son having caused a Savoyard servant to be arrested on the charge of having mixed poison in a jug of water, which always stood in the minister's cabinet. His surgeon, however, having opened the body, and declared that there was a natural cause for his death, the Savoyard was set at liberty; but the reports of some unfair practices against his life were still circulated with all the eagerness of ignorance, malevolence, and the love of the marvellous; and the duke of Savoy, madame de Maintenon and even Louis XIV. himself, were not spared by the tongues of the Parisian populace. We may well imagine that these reports had no stable foundation. It was natural that the health of a man of violent passions, envious, haughty, irritable, should give way, at the end of a long ministerial career, under anxiety, disappointment, and apprehension. If long labours and weighty cares sap the most robust constitution, and break down the strongest frame, violence of temper, unexpected grief, or extraordinary agitation, may well be supposed to produce the sudden termination of a life that has been spent in great mental and corporal exertion. The disease of Louvois was, most probably, disappointment, acting suddenly upon an enfeebled frame; and it mattered little what great organ was affected, whether the brain or the heart gave way under the pressure which was heavy unto death.

In person, Louvois was not remarkable, except for the haughtiness of his air, and a certain repulsive sternness of

countenance, which was the very opposite to the expression possessed or assumed by his father Le Tellier. One of the courtiers is reported to have said, in seeing them come forth together from the cabinet of the king, "There go the fox and the wolf." Born with great genius, educated in habits of business, endowed with extraordinary activity, possessing rapid perceptions, and capable of indefatigable application, Louvois had almost all the qualities which are necessary to a great minister; and by the exertion of those, in the particular department in which he was placed, he perfected the discipline of the French armies; he made the most important improvements that have been made in the commissariat; and he devised and executed two glorious institutions — the one for supplying well-trained soldiers for the defence of the country, the other for providing an honourable asylum for those who had shed their blood in that country's defence: I allude to the *Hôtel des Invalides*, and the *Académie des Cadets*. In the space of rather more than twenty years, he had produced the most surprising change in the armies of France, in their organisation, in their equipment, in their discipline; and that change was entirely for the better. By his counsels, and the result of his plans, the frontiers of France were extended on every side; territories of great importance, which had remained, as it were, detached from the country to which they seemed naturally to belong, and which afforded easy access for inimical powers into the heart of the French dominions, were annexed for ever to the crown of his sovereign; and a strong frontier line of well-defended fortresses was added to the natural boundaries of the country. His great talents, and his high qualities, however, were counterbalanced, as we have endeavoured to show, by lamentable defects, and destructive weaknesses. That he was vain, arrogant, haughty, and presumptuous — that he was vindictive, cruel, and ambitious — appears in all his actions, turning them from their just and reasonable course, affecting them in all their details, often depriving them of that brilliancy

and power which his genius might have afforded, greatly affecting the immediate, and utterly changing the remote, results. He opposed, thwarted, and in a great measure neutralised the schemes and views of one of the greatest generals, and of the greatest statesman, that the world has ever seen. And while he succeeded in obtaining territorial aggrandisement for his master,—while he improved the armies and raised the military glory of his country, he contributed more than any man to ruin her finances, to retard her commercial progress, to check her rising prosperity, to press down her manufacturers and agriculturists, and to dry up the sources of national wealth. He persuaded his sovereign to choose war instead of peace; to choose the glory of destruction, instead of the glory of beneficence. When he came into power, he found France prosperous, peaceful, and happy; with all her external relations promising continued tranquillity; with her resources increasing, and taxation diminishing every day. He died, and left her with a bankrupt treasury; a people loaded with imposts; commerce shackled by a thousand internal restrictions, and by external war; provinces whose murmurs approached to revolt; armies upon every frontier, and enemies in every neighbouring state. Such was his public life: nor does his private character afford anything on which to repose with greater satisfaction. The 14,000,000*l.* which he spent upon his house at Meudon speak not well, either for his economy or disinterestedness. His haughtiness in the ordinary commerce of society would form but an uninteresting topic here; and to dwell upon his libertine debaucheries would not become this book.

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